



# **HERITAGE VALLEY EARLY LEARNING**

& OUT OF SCHOOL CARE



Parent Handbook

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# HERITAGE VALLEY EARLY LEARNING & OUT OF SCHOOL CARE PARENT HANDBOOK

## Welcome

Welcome to Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care. We hope that your involvement with our centre will be a positive experience for both you and your child. We ask that you acquaint yourself with the information provided to you in our Parent's Handbook, which includes important information regarding our policies, procedures, and the philosophy of our centre. We look forward to making this partnership a pleasant experience for you and your family. If you have any questions, please contact the Director for clarification.

## Mission Statement & Vision

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care exists to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate environment conducive to the learning and healthy growth for children from infants to school age. Our focus is to provide a stimulating, caring and educational experience which promotes each child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Our goal is to promote each child's desire to become life-long learners. We make every effort to support our educators in ways that are beneficial to both them and the children they care for, resulting in continued trust and credibility with our families, educators, and community.

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we aim to provide your family with the important information and resources you will need when looking for quality care for your child. We support the professional development of our educators through ongoing training to improve the quality of care that they are providing to your family and to help them understand the ongoing needs of every child registered in our program. The service we provide to our community is meant to optimize the caregiving experience and increase the number of quality educators in our community.

## Location & Contact Information

The location and contact information for Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is:

Address:	2321 119A Street SW Edmonton, AB T6W 4S4
Phone:	825-202-6680
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:info@heritagevalleydaycare.com">info@heritagevalleydaycare.com</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.heritagevalleydaycare.com">www.heritagevalleydaycare.com</a>

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is open Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except for statutory holidays and for the holiday season from December 24 to January 1 of each year. We have 9 separate rooms divided by age for children ages 6 months to 12 years old.

## Philosophy & Goals

Our program, environment and expectations are based on a philosophy of “learning through play.” We believe in the theory that children absorb knowledge and acquire skills while engaged in productive play and we strive to provide an environment that, not only encourages children to play, but also expands and enriches their play and stimulates children to the best of their abilities and simultaneously ensures that child’s safety.

The environment at our centre is best described as open-minded and child oriented. We attempt to flow with the unique events that arise spontaneously from the ideas and thoughts of the children involved in our programs. Our Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are responsible for assisting children in expressing their interests and ideas, structuring the environment around the age appropriate choices made by the children, playing with the children, helping them realize the effects of the choices they have made, and expanding the children’s learning experiences beyond their initial choices and leading them to related ideas and interests.

For your child to receive the best possible care, a partnership is encouraged between parents and the ECEs of our centre. We feel that interaction and relationships between our ECEs and parents is important and must evoke principles mutual respect, trust and cooperation.

Familial interactions are a child’s first and foremost learning experience. Children benefit when their families, educators, and community work together with respect and harmony and honour each family’s’ diverse circumstances and culture.

Weekly and monthly programming not only supplement what the child learns outside the centre but are designed to introduce them to new concepts and experiences. Introducing diversity through our programming is important to us and is designed to launch the children into the diverse world in which we live. We strive to promote understanding and acceptance of all people. Parent involvement and input in this regard is strongly encouraged.

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our goal is to provide quality child care which is in accordance with evolving best practices and we are always looking for ways to improve our program to respond to the needs of our families. We conduct yearly parent, staff and out of school care surveys about our program so that we may receive input from various individuals and use this information to improve our program. We encourage input from parents so that we may evolve our program to meet the needs and interests of the families and children in our community.

We hold various professional development workshops throughout the year to aid in our staff’s continued education as ECEs and to enable them to continually enhance the quality of our programs.

It is our goal to create a warm and nurturing environment enriched through a “learning through play” curriculum and which recognizes and promotes the development of each child in accordance with their individual needs.

Goals are set for each child in all areas of development. Programming incorporates a variety of planned and spontaneous activities to enhance each area of development.

**Social:** We encourage children to make friends and develop positive relationships with others, including ECEs. We support children in developing their problem-solving and conflict

resolution skills. We provide cooperative experiences where children will learn about group dynamics and working with others. ECEs assist children in every facet of their social development and are models of respectful interaction with children and adults of various age groups.

**Physical:** We encourage children to enjoy both indoor and outdoor play to develop their large muscle skills and self-help skills.

**Intellectual:** We encourage children to try new things to broaden their experiences in the world. Through our programming, we aim to provide children support for their emergent literacy, math, science, and language development skills.

**Creative:** We provide numerous opportunities for children to express themselves through art, music, and drama. We provide materials and props that promote and support a child's imagination, creativity and need for exploration.

**Emotional:** We encourage children to feel pride and develop their self-confidence. We help children develop independence, self-control, and a positive attitude. We also seek to introduce children to positive coping strategies and discover means of working through some of life's more difficult feelings. We aim to help children have fun and enjoy their time both in and out of the centre.

## Code of Ethics

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our ECEs agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the following Code of Ethics. This ensures that our staff understand their ethical obligations to the children of our centre, and work with each other to promote quality child care for families in the community.

The Canadian Child Care Federation's 8 Principles of Ethical Practice are followed. They are:

- 1) Early Childhood Educators promote the health and well-being of all children.
- 2) Early Childhood Educators enable children to participate to their full potential in environments carefully planned to serve individual needs and to facilitate the child's progress in all areas of development.
- 3) Early Childhood Educators demonstrate caring for all children in all aspects of their practice.
- 4) Early Childhood Educators work in partnership with parents, recognizing that parents have primary responsibility for the care of their children, valuing their commitment to the children and supporting them in meeting their responsibilities to their children.
- 5) Early Childhood Educators work in partnership with colleagues and other service providers in the community to support the well-being of children and their families.
- 6) Early Childhood Educators work in ways that enhance human dignity in trusting, caring and cooperative relationships that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual.
- 7) Early Childhood Educators pursue, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge, skills and self-awareness needed to be professionally competent.

8) Early Childhood Educators demonstrate integrity in all their professional relationships.

## Orientation

Our centre will ensure that new families are welcomed to the centre and provided with an overview of the centre policies and procedures.

When welcoming a new child and family to the centre, the following procedure is typically of what takes place:

- A Supervisor will meet with the family and give a tour of the centre.
- A Supervisor will review the centre's program and various policies with the family and answer any questions the family may have.
- When a family is ready to enrol their child in our centre, the family will be asked to complete a registration package.
- A copy of the Parent Handbook is on our website. Parents may also be provided a copy of the Parent Handbook upon request.
- Prior to the child starting at our centre, Parents are welcome to arrange for their child to visit the centre with their child to help the child's transition into our facility. Parents must remain with their child in the room during the transition phase as the child will not be officially registered at the centre.

## Operating Policies

### **Hours of Operation and Centre Closures**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is open Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Parents are required to pick up their children by 5:45 p.m. to allow our staff time at the end of the day to clean, organize and prepare for the following day. Late pick up fees apply to pick ups after 6:00 p.m.

Our centre is closed on all statutory holidays listed below, as well as for the holiday season from December 24 to January 1 of each year. Notices of closures will be provided in the monthly newsletters and will be posted throughout the centre prior to the closure dates.

The centre observes the following statutory holidays:

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

If any of these holidays falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the centre will close for a day in lieu of that holiday.

The centre will also close for two (2) Professional Development Days each year to ensure educators have the time and opportunity to partake in continued education.

### **Admission and Registration**

Spaces are filled on a first come first serve basis and in accordance with our space availability. If the centre is at capacity, subsequent spaces will be filled with children chosen from a wait list of eligible children. Children are allocated spaces in such a way as to maintain our age groupings.

Spaces are not saved for children who are leaving the centre during the summer months or for extended periods of time during the year. If you wish to save your spot during your absence, please speak to the Director or Assistant Director.

Your child's registration package contains a lot of important information. Please ensure that you fill out all forms accurately so that we may reach you if necessary. It is important that you notify the office in the event of changes in address, phone number, emergency contact, etc.

### **Fees/Late Payments/NSF**

Monthly fees are set in accordance with our centre's fee schedule in effect at the time of registration. Fees are subject to change upon 1 calendar month notice.

Fees remain in effect regardless of extended absences, illness, vacation, or unexpected centre closures.

Fees are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of each month, with a grace period to the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the month. Late payments will be subject to a late fee of 10% of the outstanding balance per day per child after the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the month.

Non-payment of fees will result in immediate dismissal from the centre.

### **Methods of Payment**

Monthly fees are to be paid via preauthorized bank withdrawal. A PAD Agreement is part of the Registration Package.

Other fees or charges can be paid via e-transfer to [info@heritagevalleydaycare.com](mailto:info@heritagevalleydaycare.com).

### **Collections for Outstanding Fees or Other Amounts Owning**

The centre may use the services of a third-party collection agency to collect outstanding fees or other amounts owing to the centre. By registering your child at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care you authorize the centre to release any requisite information to the third-party collection agency to collect any outstanding amounts owing to the centre.

### **Pick Up, Drop Off & Absences**

Transportation to and from the centre is the responsibility of parents. Please park in the parking lot and reinforce safe practices through the following:

- do not allow your child to run or walk in the parking lot unattended;

- bring your child directly to their classroom, notify the teacher that your child is there and sign your child in/out of the centre; and
- do not allow your child to be outside unattended.

Attendance sheets are a vital part of our head count process and is used to ensure that we account for all children in each room on a regular basis. As this is a matter of your child's safety and security, we ask that you adhere to our expectations of arrival and departure.

All parents must accompany their child to the classroom and notify an ECE in the room that the child has arrived and sign their child in. The same procedure must be followed at the end of the day. Children are not permitted to leave the room unless an authorized person has come to pick them up and has signed them out for the day.

Children must be dropped off at the centre between 6:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Drop offs will not be accepted after 9:30 a.m. to ensure our programs run smoothly. Pick up can occur at any time before 5:45 p.m.

If your child will be absent, please call or e-mail the centre by 10:00 a.m. to notify us of their absence.

### **Late Pick Up of Children**

If you are going to be late to pick up your child, please call the centre to let us know.

**A late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child is applicable to pick-ups after 6:00 p.m.**

### **Persons Authorized to Pick Up Children**

Children will be released from the centre only to an authorized person whose name appears on the registration form, on a written note from the parent, written in the communication book, or conveyed to us via phone call.

Please give staff advance notice if someone else is picking up your child. Anyone who is picking up a child and is unfamiliar to staff **must** show photo identification before the child can be released.

Please notify anyone picking up your child that photo ID will be required before the child is released to them.

Staff may call a parent and verify the pickup of a child by an authorized person if no notice is given to the staff member.

**Please note that we will not release children to anyone under the age of 18 or any individual who appears intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.** In the event of a refusal to release a child, alternate arrangements may have to be made by the staff to ensure the safety of the child at the parent's expense.

### **Operating Grant**

The Government of Alberta provides licensed centres with an operating grant for all children ages 0 – Kindergarten. This operating grant is to be used by centres to reduce parent fees. To be eligible for the operating grant, children must attend the centre a minimum of 100 hours per month.

If your child does not attend the centre for the number of hours as per operating grant requirements, we will not receive the full amount of the operating grant and you will be responsible for any resulting difference in fees.

### **Subsidy**

In addition to the operating grant, subsidy is available for eligible families. To determine eligibility and apply for subsidy, please visit the Government of Alberta Child Care Subsidy webpage.

To receive maximum subsidy, a day care child must be at the centre a minimum of 100 hours per month, and a out of school care child must be at the centre a minimum of 50 hours per month.

If your child does not attend the centre for the number of hours as per subsidy requirements, we will not receive the full amount of the subsidy and you will be responsible for any resulting difference in fees.

If you will be receiving subsidy, you must be approved for subsidy prior to your child attending at the centre and proof of approval must be provided to the office. If you wish to start prior to approval being received, you will be required to pay the full monthly fee and you will be credited the following month, if applicable.

It is your responsibility to keep your subsidy valid and up to date. If your subsidy expires and is not renewed on time, you will be required to pay full fees until proof of subsidy approval is provided to us.

Please note that the subsidy office is busy, and it is best to provide all documents required for renewal at least one (1) month prior to subsidy expiry to avoid a lapse in subsidy approval. If you provide documents late, you may be required to submit an appeal to the subsidy office.

We are happy to assist you with your subsidy applications. If you require assistance completing the online application or sending documents to the office via e-mail or fax, please come talk to the Director or Assistant Director in the office.

### **Open Door Policy**

Parents are welcome to visit their children at the centre at any time throughout the day. If a lengthy visit proves to be disruptive to the other children in our care, our educators may ask that you take your child out of the room and visit with them in an empty area of the centre. Please notify the staff member that you are taking them out of the room, and after your visit is over, please bring the child back to the room and let the staff member know that he or she is back in the room.

All visitors are expected to respect our classroom rules and our daily routines.

If someone other than a parent/guardian will be visiting with a child in the centre, we will require parental/guardian approval.

Please note that visiting a child during nap time (12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.) may not be permitted if it will be disruptive to the other children.

## **No Smoking or Vaping**

There is absolutely no smoking or vaping allowed on the centre premises. A **No Smoking** sign is posted in the centre front entry and will be strictly enforced. As per City of Edmonton bylaws, smoking is also not permitted within 5 metres of any entrance to the centre.

## **Withdrawal of a Child**

One calendar month's written notice must be provided in order to withdraw a child from the centre. Notice must be given on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month (e.g. If the child's last day will be June 30, notice must be given on or before June 1). Notice given after the month has started will be treated as if given on the first of the *following* month (e.g. If notice is given on May 15 for attendance to end on June 15 the notice period will be considered as starting June 1 and full fees will be required for the month of June).

If no notice is provided, one month **full fees** (fees before the deduction of the operating grant and subsidy) will be charged and is required to be paid prior to the child's last day at the centre.

All amounts owing to the centre must be paid prior to the child's last day at the centre. Failure to pay the outstanding balance will result in the account being forwarded to a third party collection agency for collection.

## **Termination of Enrolment by the Centre**

If we feel that our centre is not able to meet your child's needs, we will strive to help you and your child find a suitable alternate child care centre for your child. We will provide one (1) calendar months' notice of termination of child care services.

Immediate termination of child care services is a last resort and within the discretion of the centre's Director.

Immediate termination will take place under the following circumstances:

- Any kind of abuse against staff members or children at our centre; and
- Non-payment of fees (termination to take place after prior notices of non-payment have been given and non-payment continues to occur).

## **Messages**

We have many ways parents can communicate with the centre and your child's ECEs. You may relay messages to us verbally in person or over the phone, via e-mail or by writing a message in the designated parent message book in your child's room.

## **Vacations**

If your child will be away from the centre for an extended period of time, please let us know at least 1 week in advance. **Please note that fees remain in effect regardless of absences due to illness or vacation.**

## Transition Policy

Parents should anticipate that their child's transition into the centre will take several days, and our educators will do their best to assist you and your family while your child transitions. At the same time, we must be mindful of the room's routines as we try to transition children into the centre in the least disruptive way.

We support transitions by allowing parents to stay with their child in the room for a maximum of 30 minutes for the first several days of starting at the centre. Parents may stay in the room with their child and the child will be encouraged to join the other children in their play, while the parent sits nearby and in sight of the child. This way, the child begins to explore the environment and gets to know the educators and other children, with the comfort of their parent nearby.

Parents may step in and out of the room during the transition time to assure their child that, when they leave, they will always return.

Children must already be registered and starting at the centre to begin the transition process.

## Staff Qualifications

Working with children daily requires specialized knowledge and skills to ensure programming and interactions are positive and challenging. All staff members at our facility hold Early Childhood Development certificates and have been certified by the Government of Alberta.

All staff members must provide the centre with original and recent police security clearances prior to starting work at our centre. It is also a policy at our centre that all staff working with children must have first aid certificates. We believe that our experienced and knowledgeable staff will create an exciting and safe learning environment for your child.

## Programming and Interaction

### **Program Planning**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is a learning through play based environment. The staff will develop program plans based on the children's interests to help guide and direct the play based learning.

Programming will not only supplement what the child learns outside the centre, but is designed to introduce them to new concepts and experiences. We strive to promote understanding, acceptance and interest in other cultures. Parent involvement and input in this regard is strongly encouraged.

### **Involvement of Children and Families in Planning**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care has an open door policy and parents are welcome to visit their children at any time. Parents are also welcome to partake in field trips and special events at the centre. We welcome any suggestions parents may have with respect to field trip and special event planning.

Parents will periodically be asked to complete questionnaires on how the centre is meeting their and their child's needs. We ask that the survey be used to provide feedback and suggestions on how the centre may improve.

As noted above, parents are welcome to share their thoughts anytime using any one of the following methods:

- Direct communication with the Director and/or staff members;
- Telephone calls
- E-mails
- Suggestion box

Every year we will also host various special events to which children and their families are welcome.

### **Parent Resources**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care has a variety of parent resources located in the front lobby. Resources are available on a variety of topics relating to parenting and are available for the parent's use.

If you wish to have a better understanding of the regulations governing child care services in Alberta, and how to choose the right child care centre for you, we encourage you to visit the Alberta Children's Services website which contains a variety of resources, including:

- Choosing Child Care: A Guide to Licensed and Approved Child Care in Alberta;
- Healthy Child Care, Healthy Child: A Guide to Promoting Health and Preventing Illness in Early Learning and Child Care Settings;
- Effective Supervision in Child Care Settings;
- Early Learning and Child Care Act;
- Early Learning and Child Care Regulations; and
- Child Care Certification Guide.

## Rooms, Daily Items and Daily Routines

### **Rooms and Staff-Child Ratios**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is made up of 9 separate rooms based on the children's ages: Infants, Toddlers, Preschool, Kindergarten and Out of School Care.

Staff to child ratios are always maintained in accordance with Alberta Child Care Licensing Regulations as follows:

<u>Age of Children</u>	<u>Play Time</u> (Staff:Child)	<u>Nap Time</u> (Staff:Child)
Less than 12 months	1:3	1:6
12 months to 19 months	1:4	1:8
19 months to less than 3 years	1:6	1:12

3 years to less than 4 years	1:8	1:16
4 years and older	1:10	1:20
Kindergarten & Out of School Care	1:15	N/A

### **Daily Items**

We ask that you send your child to the centre in comfortable clothing and indoor footwear, and that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather (i.e. raincoats, snowsuits, sun hats, etc.), as the children are taken out every day, weather permitting.

Indoor shoes must be provided for all children. We ask that you provide comfortable soft-soled shoes for your child.

During the summer months, we will also ask you to send sunscreen and insect repellent to be left at the centre in your child's cubby.

Our centre is an active and busy place. Your child may be involved in messy play and activities, so we ask that you send your child to the centre in play clothes. Please avoid dressing your child in clothes that are special to you.

The following is a list of daily items your child will require:

### **Day Care**

- ❖ Disposable diapers, wipes, creams, etc.;
- ❖ Spare clothes (2 sets if your child is potty training);
- ❖ Indoor shoes;
- ❖ A comfort item (such as a soft toy for nap time);
- ❖ A family picture for our Family Boards;
- ❖ Under 19 months:
  - All milk/formula and food for the day
- ❖ Sippy cup or refillable water bottle;
- ❖ Seasonal items:
  - Summer – Sunblock, hats, mosquito repellent;
  - Winter – Winter boots, mittens, hat, coat, snowsuit.

*Please note that Alberta Health has prohibited the use of baby powder in child care facilities due to the dangers of inhaling particles. Please do not send baby powder to the centre.*

### **Out of School Care**

- ❖ Indoor shoes;
- ❖ A refillable water bottle;
- ❖ Daily lunch (summer months and school closure days);
- ❖ Seasonal items:
  - Summer – Sunblock, hats, mosquito repellent;
  - Winter – Winter boots, mittens, hat, coat, snowsuit.

We try our best to keep track of your child's belongings, however, we ask that you label every item your child brings from home (laundry markers work well).

If an item is needed for your child's daily needs, you will receive a note in your child's cubby.

### **Daily Routines**

Our daily routines are a general overview of how the children's days are structured. Each group has an established routine that is flexible and adaptable to the changing needs of the children. Outdoor play is part of every day at the centre (weather permitting) and so we strongly urge you to send your child to the centre with clothes that are appropriate for the conditions outside.

Daily routines are posted in each room. A variety of activities and items are provided for the children's use throughout the day including push toys, books, art and craft items, manipulative toys, and water and sand tables.

## **Health and Hygiene**

### **Nap/Rest Time**

At our centre, rest is an important aspect of the children's daily routine, as well as their growth and development.

For our Preschool rooms, rest time is between 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. Children are encouraged to lay or sit down quietly on their mats to allow anyone who wishes a nap the opportunity to do so. Children who do not nap will be given quiet activities on their mats or at the table area. Children who sleep past 2:00 p.m. will be permitted to remain sleeping until they naturally wake up.

For Infants (12 months and up) and Toddlers, rest time starts at 11:45 a.m. and ends whenever the children have woken up. Infants under the age of 12 months do not have a fixed rest time and are permitted to sleep on their own schedule.

Pre-K, Kindergarten and Out of School Care children do not nap.

We know nap times can sometimes impact a child's sleep schedule at home and we understand parents may be frustrated with a late bedtime, especially as children get older. However, please note that we will not wake a child up early from a nap, nor will we prevent a child from napping if they so choose as this will not be keeping in line with that child's needs. Children are permitted to fall asleep and wake up naturally during the rest period.

### **Toys and Blankets from Home**

In our program, we provide toys and materials that will foster creativity, allow children to role play and express themselves emotionally, enhance imagination, stimulate language development, foster social and cooperative play skills, facilitate motor development and promote positive values and attitudes, including acceptance and equality.

We have found that toy selection is especially important when working with groups of children. Children's abilities to play happily and constructively differs with the size of the group and the play equipment available to them. Therefore, we ask that you do not bring toys to the centre, with the exception of soft cuddly toys which can be used during rest time.

On special occasions (e.g. celebrations, theme days, show and share, etc.), children may be permitted to bring special toys or books from home. Your child's ECE will let you know what types of items will be permitted taking into account the occasion and the program planning.

**The centre is not responsible for any items that children bring from home. By enrolling your child at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, you are absolving the centre of any liability for lost or damaged items that are brought from home.**

### **Nutrition and Menu**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care provides an AM snack, hot lunch and a PM snack to children ages 19 months to Kindergarten. Out of School Care children are provided an AM snack and PM snack. All food provided to children is as per Canada Food Guide requirements with respect to nutrition and portion sizes.

AM snack is provided at 8:30 a.m., lunch is provided at 11:00 a.m. (or when Kindergarten children return from school) and PM snack is provided at 2:30 p.m. (or when children return from school). If you feel that your child will need additional snacks outside of our set snack times, please feel free to send supplementary snacks with your child to the centre.

Our menu is posted in each room, as well as the kitchen, and is rotated on a four week basis. It is reviewed and changed seasonally. If you require a copy of the menu, please ask a staff member.

Parents are permitted to send food to the centre from home. Each room is equipped with a fridge and microwave. We ask that you please do not send any foods which need to be cooked in the microwave before serving or which requires a can opener (e.g. instant mac and cheese, instant noodles, canned soup).

Please make sure to label all food brought from home with your child's name.

Please note that we are a NUT-FREE centre.

Parents are responsible for providing all food and drinks for infants until 19 months old. After 19 months, children will be fed from the menu. If you wish for your child to eat more than what is provided at the centre, it is your responsibility to provide additional snacks for your child.

If your child has several food allergies or dietary restrictions, you will be asked to provide your child with food and snacks for the day to be served to them at the centre.

We ask that you do not send your child soda or candy.

Meals considered a social activity. Children are encouraged to remain seated and calm during meals and snacks.

### **Infant Feeding and Sleeping**

For children aged 0 to 12 months, we will ask parents to provide us with a written notes of their child's daily routine including eating and sleeping patterns. Staff will follow the child's home routine until the child is ready to follow the day care routine.

Children under the age of 6 months will be held by staff while they are fed and until the child is ready to hold the bottle him or herself.

As noted above, parents are responsible for providing food and drinks for children between the ages of 0 and 19 months.

Young infants who are unable to roll over by themselves will be always kept on their back when sleeping and will be monitored at all times.

### **Cleaning & Sanitizing**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care will do its utmost to ensure the health and safety of each child attending and each staff working at the centre.

There are a variety of checklists in place to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the centre including a Playground Safety Checklist, a Room Safety Checklist, a Daily Cleaning Checklist and a Weekly Cleaning Checklist.

### **Handwashing**

Proper handwashing is very important for the health and safety of the children and staff and to stop the spread of germs and bacteria. Each room in the centre has a sink with running water. Hand soap and paper towels dispensers are available for use by the children and staff. Hand sanitizer is also provided for the staff.

### **Safe Food Handling**

Staff who cook for the centre will have completed a *Food Sanitation and Hygiene* course through Alberta Health Services.

### **Nut-Free**

There are children who attend our centre who have life threatening allergies to peanuts and other types of nuts. To provide a safe environment to these children, our centre is **PEANUT AND NUT FREE**. Any food brought to the centre, whether by children or staff, must be free of peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, nuts or nut oils.

## Health and Safety

### **SIDS**

ECEs working with infants under 12 months are trained in the care of young infants and are provided with detailed information regarding Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Young infants who are unable to roll over by themselves will be always kept on their back when sleeping and will always be monitored.

### **Illnesses and Outbreak Management**

Child care centres play an important role in helping control the spread of illness and must monitor children and staff on a daily basis for any sign or symptoms of illness. The following policy applies to both children and staff of the child care centre.

Children **must not** attend the centre if they exhibit one or more of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained rash or cough
- Symptoms of any communicable illness or infection; or
- Is inexplicably unable to participate in the program (e.g. lethargic).

Staff will assess a child if he/she is exhibiting any of the above symptoms. When a staff member suspects that a child is exhibiting a sign or symptom of illness, the license holder must ensure that the child's parent arranges for the immediate removal of the child from the program premises.

The child may not return to the program premises until the license holder is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to persons on the program premises. Acceptable evidence includes the child being symptom free for 24 hours, or, if the child is still exhibiting symptoms, with a doctor's note stating that they are approved for attendance in a child care setting.

Staff will record and document children who are ill on their rooms' Illness Record (Health & Medication Binder). The Illness Record will include: (a) the name of the child; (b) the date the child was observed to be ill; (c) the name of the staff member who identified the child as being ill; (d) the time the parent was initially contacted; (e) the name of the staff who contacted the parent; (f) the time the child was removed from the program; and (g) the date the child was returned to the program.

When a child is sick, the parents will be notified first by the Staff or Director. If we are unable to get in touch with either of the parents, the child's emergency contacts will be called.

If a parent is informed about their child being sick and fails to pick up the child from the centre in a timely manner, or make alternate arrangements for the child's care, a follow-up call will be made to the parent. If the parent still does not pick up the child, staff will be required to report the failure to the local health authority, such as the Health Unit or Child Protective Services.

Child care centres are required to report a suspected outbreak to their local public health unit. An outbreak is defined as 2 or more children with the same category of symptoms that started within 48 hours of one another. If a room does have a suspected outbreak, the Staff will report it to the Director who will take the steps necessary to report the suspected outbreak to the requisite public health unit.

### **Incident/Accident Reports**

If your child requires first aid treatment at the centre, or is subject to an incident which the staff believe you should be made aware of (i.e. falling down and scraping his/her knee), you will be required to sign an Incident Report which outlines the details of what occurred and the action taking subsequent to the incident.

### **Biting**

Part of our program is to work with children to prevent biting incidents. If an incident of biting occurs at the centre, staff will quickly intervene and will express disapproval to the child who has bitten but will not react harshly to that child. The bitten child will be comforted and first aid will be administered if necessary. Parents of both children involved will be notified via a written Incident Report (see above). **The identity of each child will always be kept confidential.** Our centre works within a "3 Bite Policy." If a child is involved as a biter on three (3) separate

occasions, they may be removed from the centre. Instances of biting leading to severe injuries may lead to immediate removal. Termination of child care services will be done on a case by case basis.

### **Child Abuse Protocol**

Under the provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, RSA 2000, c. C-12, any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of intervention shall report the matter immediately to Child Intervention Services.

Reporting is done by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437 or by calling the district office of Child Intervention Services. Further information is available in "Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Services" published by the Government of Alberta.

### **Self-Reporting Policy**

We are required to self-report to the local Child Care Licensing office within two (2) business days in the event of certain incidences. These incidences include:

- an emergency evacuation;
- an unexpected centre closure;
- an intruder onto the centre's premises;
- an illness that requires emergency health care and/or an overnight hospital visit;
- an error in the administration of medication by a program staff or volunteer which results in a child becoming ill, injured, in need of first aid, emergency health care and/or a hospital visit;
- the death of a child;
- an unexpected absence of a child from the program (e.g. a lost child);
- a child being removed by the centre by a non-custodial parent/guardian or other unauthorized individual;
- an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect by a staff member or volunteer;
- the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta; and
- a child being left on the centre's premises outside of the centre's operating hours.

### **Insect Repellent and Sunscreen**

All parents are required to sign an Insect Repellent and Sunscreen Policy as part of Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care's Registration Package.

You are required to provide the centre with a bottle of sunscreen and insect repellent for your child, to be applied to your child by an educator prior to going outside or on an offsite excursion.

Please ensure that you label your child's insect repellent and sunscreen. All bottles may remain in your child's cubby.

## **Health and Medication**

### **First Aid and First Aid Kits**

All staff members are required to hold a first aid certificate and maintain its validity. Every room of our centre, as well as the office is equipped with a first aid safety kit.

## **Medication Administration Policy and Procedure**

### **Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure children registered in Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care are receiving proper delivery of prescribed medications, herbal remedies and/or emergency medications (generally referred to as “Medication” in this handbook). Proper delivery of Medication includes proper handling, proper dosages, proper administration and proper timing of administration by qualified ECEs. Only ECEs with a valid first aid certificate are permitted to administer Medication to a child.

### **Procedure**

1. Parents must provide written consent to the centre to authorize the administration of Medication to their child. Please ask your child’s ECE for a copy of the requisite Medication Administration Form. Please note that a separate Medication Form must be filled for *each* Medication authorized to be administered to your child. Each Medication Form may only authorize the administration of Medication for a maximum 2 week period.
2. The Medication Form requires the following information: Child’s Name; Medication Name; Amount to be Given; Expiry Date of Medication; Start Date; End Date; Exact Time(s) Medication is to be Given; Special Instructions; Time Medication/Herbal Remedy was given to the child prior to arriving at the centre; and Parent Signature.
3. Parents must give the Medication to a qualified Staff Member for proper storage in the centre. Emergency Medication will be kept in a container labeled “Emergency Medication” in the child’s room, out of reach of the children, but accessible to the Staff in the event of an emergency. Non-Emergency Medication will be stored in a locked container in the child’s room. If Medication is required to be refrigerated, it will be kept in a locked container stored in your child’s room.
4. In the event of a field trip, or other outside excursion with the centre, Medication will be taken out of the centre and will be kept in a secure bag accessible to Staff only.
5. All Medication must be in its original labelled container. All directions for the administration of Medication must be on the label. Medication will only be administered in accordance with labelled directions. Directions set out on the Medication Form filled out by the child’s Parent must be in accordance with the labelled directions on the original container.
6. Medication will only be administered to a child by a qualified Staff Member holding a valid First Aid Certificate.
7. The Staff Member administering the Medication will sign the Medication Form verifying that the Medication was administered in accordance with the original direction on the labelled Medication container.
8. After administration of any Medication, the Staff Member administering the Medication will monitor the child for a minimum of 15 minutes for any signs of an allergic reaction.

9. If an allergic reaction is suspected or observed, the centre will immediately contact the child's Parents, or an Emergency Contact if the Parents are unavailable.
10. If a Parent administers any Medication to a child at home and prior to their arrival at the Centre, that Parent must record the time the Medication was given to the child and initial beside the entry on the Medication Administration Form.
11. Staff must return any expired or unused Medication to the child's Parent upon expiry, or at the end of the authorization period.

### **Medical Devices**

Medical Devices refers to Medication which requires administration in a specific or special manner (i.e. Epi-Pens, Inhalers, Stomach Tubes, etc.).

Parents must make the centre aware that their child requires health care which involves a medical device. Parents will be required to provide specific information about the medical issue and may be asked to provide training to the Staff Members who will be administering the Medication in the child's room. Training must include a discussion of the purpose of the medication, the method of administration and storage methods. A demonstration may be required under certain circumstances. Parents will also be asked to provide a detailed written guide regarding the health care required. Documentation showing the completion of any training will be kept in both the child and staff's files.

### **Transportation of Children to School**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care does not currently provide transportation of children to and from school. We will be partnering with neighbourhood schools and yellow bus services to be a designated bus stop. It will be the parent's responsibility to register their child for yellow bus service during the school year.

As our centre grows, we will do a needs assessment to determine whether transportation services are required.

### **Child Assessments & Development**

We believe that every child is unique and is growing and developing at his or her own rate. Children's growth patterns are rarely smooth and linear. Sometimes growth and/or development seem to be at a standstill. This often happens just before a big step in a child's development.

Parents are asked for input regarding their children's development. Developmental tools like the Nipissing checklist are used in a collaborative effort between staff and families so that appropriate developmental goals can be set for each child. Ongoing observations are done on each child by the staff and files are kept in the child's room.

If a screening test is done, parents will be informed if their child needs any further testing, and a referral will be made to the necessary health care or child care professionals. Parents are then

at liberty to decide what, if anything, they want to do. ECEs will be happy to assist families in any way they can.

## Staff-Child Interaction & Guidance

### **Staff-Child Interaction**

**All staff members are required to interact with children respectfully.**

The following are descriptions of positive ways we encourage our staff to interact with children:

- ❖ Follow the children – let the children initiate the activity or interaction whenever possible;
- ❖ Invite the children to engage in activities and always give them a choice; and
- ❖ Show confidence in the children's abilities by allowing them to do as much possible by themselves.

We also help the children achieve independence by:

- ❖ Respecting the child's right to do something by him or herself;
- ❖ Defining clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour;
- ❖ Redirecting children who are engaged in unacceptable behaviour instead of disciplining them, when possible; and
- ❖ Structuring appropriate consequences which help a child accept responsibility for his or her behaviour or misbehaviour.

### **Child Guidance**

Our program strives to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which children are expected to be respectful to themselves, others and to property. The goal of our guidance policy is to help children develop self-control and self-esteem and help children to recognize and develop appropriate behaviour. Developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention strategies are used to encourage positive behaviours and create positive outcomes.

**The following Child Guidance Policy applies to Infants and is developmentally appropriate for their level of understanding.**

#### **Prevention and Redirection:**

Preventative methods begin with role modeling by the staff. When a child's caregivers are polite and considerate to others, they set the tone for everyone at the centre. Each child's individual needs, development level, and family and cultural experiences are factors taken into account when determining and encouraging age appropriate behaviour.

Preventative strategies include:

- Building positive and respectful relationships with the children;
- Sufficient play materials are supplied to children to support them in play with other children, or on their own, if they so choose.
- Changing the children's environment to support their interests and development; and
- Providing extended period of child led play to allow them to extend their interests and eliminate frustration; and

- Educators will position themselves throughout the room or play area and at the children's level so that they are able to effectively supervise the children and be available to them as needed.

Redirecting children, offering them choices and keeping them engaged in developmentally appropriate activities, and effective transitions from activity-to-activity help to prevent difficult behaviour in children. Consistency is key when explaining consequences of behaviour and setting limits.

**The following Child Guidance Policy applies to Toddler, Preschool, Kindergarten and Out of School Care children:**

Prevention:

Preventative methods begin with role modeling by the staff. When a child's educators are polite and considerate of others, they set the tone for everyone at the centre. Each child's individual needs, development level, family and cultural experiences are factors taken into account when determining and encouraging age appropriate behaviour.

Redirecting children, offering them choices, keeping them engaged in developmentally appropriate activities, and implementing smooth transitions between activities help prevent difficult behaviours in children. Consistency is key when explaining consequences of behaviour and setting limits.

Preventative strategies include:

- Sufficient play materials are supplied to children to support them in play with other children, or on their own, if they so choose.
- Changing the children's environment to support their interests and development; and
- Providing extended period of child led play to allow them to extend their interests and eliminate frustration.
- Building positive relationships with children;
- Role modeling positive behaviours;
- Redirecting children;
- Treating children respectfully and as individuals;
- Providing positive feedback;
- Communicating expectations of behaviours and consequences clearly and using developmentally appropriate language;
- Planning for positive outcomes (e.g. programming, ensuring there are sufficient materials for children's use, reducing waiting, etc.);
- Planning for transitions (e.g. giving warnings, giving children who require extra time a head start on a transition, creating small group experiences, etc.);
- Educators will position themselves throughout the room or play area so that they are able to effectively supervise the children and be available to them as needed; and
- Engaging children in setting up the expectations of their room (e.g. allowing OSC children to create "rules" for their room and giving them ownership and responsibility over the implementation and adherence to the rules that they have created).

Intervention:

If a child does not respond to preventative methods of child guidance, an intervention strategy must be implemented. The child's educator will be responsible for utilizing the intervention strategy deemed necessary under the circumstances.

Intervention strategies include:

- Giving a child choices;
- Allowing for personal time away from the group/activity (with effective supervision in place);
- Having a discussion with the child;
- Engaging the child in problem solving solution, if developmentally appropriate (e.g. Out of School Care children);
- Reminding children of expectations and consequences using clear and developmentally appropriate language;
- Asking for help from another educator or the Directors; and
- Having a discussion with the Directors and/or Parents.

**The following forms of punishment are not permitted:**

- **Physical or verbal punishment, physical degradation or emotional deprivation;**
- **Denial, or the threat or denial, of any basic necessity (e.g. food); and**
- **Any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.**

Continued Negative Behaviours or Violence:

If a specific negative behaviour continues despite the use of prevention and intervention strategies, or if the child exhibits severe behaviours, such as violence or destruction of property, the following intervention strategies may be implemented:

- The child will be taken to a separate space and will be given the chance to calm down with an educator present;
- Educators will work with the child to implement strategies to help them calm down, such as taking deep breaths, giving them a quiet space to sit or talking with them.
- Physical intervention will only be used if the child is at risk of hurting themselves or others;
- If a child has calmed down, they will be given the opportunity to return to the group. Educators must be supportive and sensitive when transitioning the child to the group and must not do or say anything which would negatively impact the child's transition back into the group;
- Calling the child's parents/guardians;
- Informing the Directors of these incidents.

Our program has a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** with respect to violent behaviour or destruction of property. These incidences will not be permitted and will result in immediate removal from the group and the child's parents/guardians will be notified. Continued violent behaviour may result in dismissal from the centre. Termination is always a last resort, but our program reserves the right to terminate a child's enrolment if deemed necessary.

Other families will be informed of any violent incidences if deemed necessary by the Directors. For example, if a violent episode was witnessed by other children, the families will also be

notified so that they are prepared to deal with any resulting trauma those children may have felt because of witnessing said violence.

### The Family's Role in Child Guidance:

Families are encouraged to work with us as partners in developing positive behaviours and addressing negative ones. We encourage open communication between educators and families in the best interests of the children and ask that any pertinent information be shared with us to help educators make decisions as to the guidance strategies they should use. It helps our educators better understand a child if they are aware of things going on at home (e.g. changes in the home environment, new extra-curricular activities, custody changes, etc.).

Guidance strategies used at home will only be implemented at the centre if they align with our program philosophy and the relevant child care licensing standards.

Parents will be informed about a child's behaviours, both positive and negative, each day at pick up time.

If a child's behaviour warrants a meeting between the educators and Directors, a mutually agreeable time will be set for this meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to create an action plan for the child to help address these behaviours. As noted above, termination is a last resort, but may be utilized if negative behaviours are not curtailed.

## Technology

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we do not provide the children with electronic devices, such as tablets or phones.

On certain special occasions, or during the summer months, children are permitted to bring these items from home, however, daily use of these items is not permitted. Any such items from home that are used will be viewed by the staff to ensure that they are age appropriate and educational. Children are supervised any time a video game, computer game, or personal entertainment device is used. Alternative activities are always available for children.

Inappropriate use of items brought from home, such as taking pictures of other children, viewing inappropriate websites or apps, sending messages or using foul language will not be tolerated. Children caught violating this rule will not be permitted to bring these items back to the centre for a period, as stipulated by the Supervisor and as appropriate.

**The centre is not responsible for any items or electronic devices that children bring from home. By enrolling your child at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, you are absolving the centre of any liability for lost or damaged items (electronic or other) that are brought from home.**

## Inclusion and Diversity

As Early Childhood Educators, we see each child as an individual with their own unique qualities, characteristics and skills and we strive to recognize each child's uniqueness. At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we create an environment in which children are exposed to different cultures and backgrounds and are encouraged to explore, experiment, and create in a diverse and multicultural environment.

In the pursuit of exploring the various lives of the children in our centre, our community and our world, we will often discuss and read with the children about various beliefs, lifestyles or customs.

Any material will be presented to the children in an objective manner and is intended to aid the children in developing positive self-image and a feeling of pride in themselves and the community in which we live.

### **Holiday Celebrations**

Holiday celebrations are an excellent way to promote diversity and learn about other cultures. Some holidays can be appropriately celebrated with special snacks. Others may be best honoured through activities such as food drives, charitable collections, or visits from special guests. If your family celebrates a particular holiday that you would like presented at the centre, please discuss with your child's ECE an appropriate way to celebrate at the centre.

### **Birthdays**

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we encourage celebrating each child's birthday and we go out of our way to make sure that each child feels special on their special day. If you are going to be sending food for your child's birthday, please ask your child's ECE first. Healthy eating and habits are an important objective at our centre and so we ask that you do not send candy or other sweets (i.e. cupcakes or cake) for your child's birthday. However, we would welcome healthy snacks such as fruits, veggies, cheese, crackers, yogurt cups, etc.

**Please keep in mind that we are a NUT-FREE centre.**

## Field Trips

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care arranges several field trips during the summer months in order to provide an educational, social, cultural, environmental and recreational experience for the children.

All field trips will be an educational, social, cultural, environmental and recreational experience for children. These experiences will be chosen with input from the children and may take place at various locations around the City of Edmonton.

All Parents and/or Guardians must sign permission slips allowing their child(ren) to attend each specific field trip.

Parents are welcome to volunteer on field trips. Please refer to the Volunteer section of this handbook for further details.

The cost of field trips will be added to your monthly fees and must be paid at the same time as fees are due.

If you do not want your child to attend field trips, you will need to find alternate care for him/her on field trip days as there will not be additional ECEs at the centre to care for your child.

In the event of an emergency, by signing our consent forms, parents authorize Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care to obtain any medical attention or emergency care required and assume any financial costs associated with said care.

If a child's behaviour on a field trip puts his/her safety, or the safety of others, at risk, that child's Parent and/or Guardian will be called to pick up the child from the field trip location and that child may not be allowed to attend at the next scheduled field trip. Any incidents must be documented by the child's teacher and provided to the Director to make a fair conclusion in this regard.

Drop off and pick up of children from field trip sites is not permitted.

As most field trips take place during the summer months, staff will provide children with an orientation at the beginning of summer holidays. Summer orientation will include discussion of the rules and expectations of behaviour during field trips. There will also be an extensive discussion of what a child is to do in the event of an emergency. Rules, expectations, and emergency procedures will be reviewed again with children before every single field trip.

### **Transportation**

Any transportation owned and used by Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care during field trips will be an approved Transport Canada mode of transportation. Children will not be transported by a privately owned vehicle at any time.

Parent Volunteers choosing to transport their own child in their own vehicle or utilizing a different mode of transportation during a field trip absolve the centre from any liability with respect to any accidents, damage or vandalism that may occur.

Parent Volunteers choosing to leave their vehicle at the centre and use the centre's form of transportation during a field trip absolve the centre from any liability with respect to any vandalism or accidents that may occur to their vehicle as a result of leaving said vehicle at the centre while on the field trip.

### **Forms and Approval**

All permission forms must be signed by each child's Parent and/or Guardian. If a permission slip is not signed, the child will not be permitted to attend the field trip. Verbal authorization does not constitute sufficient permission.

All medication administration forms must be signed by each child's Parent and/or Guardian. If a child requires medication in the event of an emergency (e.g. an EPI pen) and said medication is not provided by the child's Parent/Guardian, the child will not be permitted to attend the field trip.

Any Volunteers will be required to sign a Volunteer Policy and Procedure form.

## **Volunteering**

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care we welcome volunteers interested in being involved with our centre. The purpose of volunteers is to provide extra support and aid to our centre, whether we are in the centre or on a field trip. Volunteers do not count as staff for the purposes of maintaining staff to children ratios.

There are three types of Volunteers that may be at a centre at any given time: (1) Centre Volunteers; (2) Parent Volunteers; and (3) Junior Volunteers.

### **Centre Volunteers**

Often in the pursuit of their child care certifications, our centre will allow Centre Volunteers to work at the centre to gain experience in the field. Centre Volunteers may aid Staff Members in a support position, such as retrieving items, helping the children getting dressed to go outdoors, helping children get their shoes on, tidying the room, etc., but may also help Staff Members in a more substantial position, such as leading group activities, leading circle time, organizing games or craft projects, etc. Centre Volunteers are not permitted to take the children anywhere outside the presence of a qualified Staff Member of the centre. All Centre Volunteers must be over the age of 18 years and are required to provide the centre with an original recent criminal record check (obtained within the last 6 months).

### **Parent Volunteers**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care encourages its families to share their cultural experiences and/or preferences by volunteering their time and knowledge to the children registered in our programs. Parent Volunteers are not permitted to have unsupervised access to children (other than their own child(ren)) and are not permitted to take the children anywhere outside the presence of a qualified Staff Member of the centre. Parent Volunteers are not required to provide recent Criminal Record Checks to the centre as they will not have unsupervised access to the children.

### **Junior Volunteers**

Junior Volunteers are between the ages of 13 years and 18 years and must have completed a registered babysitting course recognized by Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care and the program Director. Junior Volunteers may aid Staff Members in a support position only, such as retrieving items, helping the children by getting dressed to go outdoors, helping children get their shoes on, tidying the room, etc. Junior Volunteers are not permitted to have unsupervised access to children and are not permitted to take the children anywhere outside the presence of a qualified Staff Member of the centre. Junior Volunteers are not required to provide recent Criminal Records Checks to the centre as they will not have unsupervised access to the children.

## **Community Involvement**

### **Community Resources**

The staff at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care are happy to assist you with any issues you may have both in and out of the centre. If you or your child has an issue with which you need assistance, please discuss it with the staff or the Director. We are happy to provide referrals to speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, community resources and early learning resources within the community.

Working relationships with the resources in our community including the local library, health units, public schools, etc. are of the utmost importance to us.

### **Community Partnerships**

Our staff is sensitive to the needs of the families in our care. When a parent approaches us with a concern and seeks help, we will be able to provide suggestions or research relevant resources to help the family in need. When necessary, appropriate referrals will be provided

and printouts will be made available. We will then follow-up with the parent to determine if alternative resources need to be researched and provided.

Lines of communication are kept open with the neighbourhood schools through staff visits and the monthly school newsletters which we request from the individual schools to be delivered to us monthly. A list of the children attending each school will be e-mailed to the schools at the beginning of the school year and on an ongoing basis if changes are made. Staff inform themselves of special events happening at the school so that we may consider their programming when we develop ours.

### **Community Complaint Policy and Procedure**

In the event a complaint is made by a community member to Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, staff will be instructed to get the following information from the individual: name, phone number, date, and nature of complaint. The staff will then forward this information to the Director. The Director will be responsible for addressing the complaint and taking any steps necessary to resolve the matter.

## **Communication**

### **Communication with Families/Information Sharing**

An open line of communication is very important for your child's experience at our centre. Please speak to your child's ECEs on a regular basis and compare what is happening at home and at the centre. We believe that parents and staff can learn from each other. Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the program by volunteering or visiting the centre.

Notices and special messages are posted on the message boards in the front entrance. A monthly newsletter will also be sent out at the beginning of each month to provide updates and announcements. Please take the time to read our newsletters as they contain important information. New policies are often announced via our newsletters and it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this information.

Although the Director and her designated staff may be available more often, regular office hours are from Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 am. If you have any questions or concerns that you would like to share, please contact the Director during office hours. We will do our best to respond to your e-mail or phone call within 24 hours.

Please note that we always welcome feedback from our parents. If you have any questions or concerns about something that is happening in your child's room, please approach your child's caregiver first. If your question or concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the Director or her designated staff.

### **Complaints**

As a parent of a child attending our centre, any issues or concerns that you may have are of utmost importance to us. If any issue or concern arises, we ask that you immediately discuss it with your child's ECE. If your concern is not resolved or addressed, please speak to the Director or her designated staff. The Director will do her best to resolve any issue or concern that you may have.

Once the Director has reviewed and discussed the issue with you, you will receive a final decision, either verbally or in writing, depending on the nature of the issue.

If a parent is not satisfied with the action that has been taken, he or she is welcome to contact the Alberta Child Care Licensing Office at 780-427-0444.

### **Confidentiality**

All staff members and ECEs are required to sign confidentiality agreements as part of their employment. Information provided to Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care by parents/guardians is considered confidential and shall not be made available to anyone outside the centre except in the following circumstances:

- 1) To determine the status of Alberta child care subsidy;
- 2) To report arrears to a third party collection agency;
- 3) To determine the status of a payment of fees from a third party agency (e.g. Alberta Works);
- 4) To report cases of suspected abuse or neglect; and
- 5) With parental consent (parents must sign a Consent to Release Information).

As an Alberta child care facility, we are required to provide information contained in a child's file to a parent/guardian upon reasonable notice and within a reasonable amount of time. Please note that in certain situations, information may be redacted from a child's file (e.g. If parents are separated and one parent requests a copy of their child's registration package, the other parent's information will be redacted to protect that parent's confidentiality rights).

## **Emergency Evacuation**

Regular evacuation drills are conducted monthly to desensitize the children to the sound of the fire alarm and to train them in accordance with proper evacuation procedure. This helps to reduce panic and mitigate the effects of confusion in the event of a real emergency.

Staff are trained in the correct evacuation procedures and alternate routes and are reminded of shelter locations and the use of fire extinguishers.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure:**

1. When the fire alarm sounds, a designated staff member from each room will take the Attendance Records, Emergency Records and Emergency Backpack and lead the children out of the centre through the nearest accessible exit and to the muster point.
2. The secondary staff member of each room will be responsible for checking the room and bathrooms and will close the door and join his/her group outside.
3. In the event of bad or wintry weather conditions, the secondary staff member will be responsible for gathering the children's coats and joining them outside (if it is safe to do so).
4. The Director or designate will check all the rooms, washrooms, office, staff bathroom, kitchen, and hallways. All doors must be closed after the rooms have been checked.

5. Children will be kept in their own groups and a staff member will take attendance ensuring all children are accounted for.
6. Neither staff nor children are permitted to re-enter the premises until authorized to do so by the fire department, or in the case of a drill, by the Director or designate.
7. A key is not required for the muster point.
8. All parents will be made aware of the evacuation policy at the time of enrolment. In the event of an actual emergency (and not a drill), parents will be notified from the muster point.
9. If we are denied re-entry to the building, the children will be taken to the Superstore at 11835 26 Ave SW, Edmonton, AB T6W 3R3. A key is not required because the store is always open during centre operating hours. Parents will be called and arrangements made to pick their children up there.

## Lock Down

Certain emergency situations, such as tornado warnings or threats outside the centre, do not allow for the safe evacuation of the centre. In the event of an emergency which prevents the safe evacuation of the daycare, the following lock down procedure will be followed to isolate the children and staff from the danger:

1. The Director will notify staff of the need for a lock down;
2. The Director will call emergency services (if necessary);
3. When given notice of lock down, ECEs will lead the children out of the room and into the basement. Children will be kept away from all windows. If it is not safe to leave the room, ECEs will keep all children in the room, lower all window coverings and barricade the room door if necessary.
4. If safe to do so, the Director or designate will check all the rooms, washrooms, office, staff bathroom, kitchen and hallways. All doors will be closed after the rooms have been checked;
5. No one will be permitted to enter or exit the centre until given clearance by police or the Director or designate.

## Promoting a Safe and Healthy Environment

### **Centre Policies and Procedures**

- The centre is inspected annually by the Health Inspector as part of licensing renewal;
- All appliances used in the centre meet safety requirements and are kept in good repair;
- Fire drills are practiced on a monthly basis;
- Children are supervised and accounted for at all times throughout the day through the use of sign-in sheets and head counts;

- Staff watch for and remove any safety hazards on a daily basis, such as broken glass, toys or equipment;
- Toxic materials, such as cleaning fluids, are kept out of children's reach;
- Only non-toxic materials are used by and accessible to the children (i.e. for arts and crafts);
- The use of aerosols is avoided;
- The use of pesticides is avoided, both indoors and outdoors. If necessary, pesticides are used only when children are not present and in such a manner that their effect is worn off before the children return to the centre. If unable to do so, children will be kept far away from areas where pesticides are used.
- Photos of children are only taken and used with parental consent;
- Weekly planning must positively reflect the diversity of our centre.

### **Outdoor Play**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care has a three play spaces attached to the centre and has several neighbourhood parks within walking distance. Children play outside at least once per day, weather permitting. Children remain indoors between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., with the exception of scheduled field trips.

To help make outdoor play more enjoyable for children, we ask that children come to the centre with appropriate outdoor clothes (e.g. hats, mittens, warm jackets, snow shoes, etc.). **If you are sending your child to the centre in a winter jacket, please ensure that the drawstrings are removed from the jacket hood. We want to avoid having these get caught on playground equipment.**

For the safety of the children, we will not go outdoors in the following circumstances:

- Temperatures fall below -22 degrees Celsius (with wind chill) (-18 degrees Celsius for children under 19 months);
- Snowy or rainy weather;
- Smoky conditions (e.g. due to wildfires); and
- During the summer months, we will take precautions when going outside in accordance with the Environment Canada UV Index. If the UV index is higher than 7, we will avoid going outside between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

### **Playground Safety**

To ensure the safety of the children, the play spaces are securely enclosed at all times and the gate is locked during centre closure hours. When children are playing outside, staff will position themselves strategically throughout the playground to supervise children.

The outdoor play space for Infants and Toddlers is separated from the Preschool, Kindergarten and Out of School Care children. The play space provides a choice of age appropriate activities that reflect the children's needs and interests.

Playground Safety is maintained through the following steps and precautions:

- Prior to the children going into the playground, one staff member will step out to inspect the playground for any broken bottles or glass thrown over the fence. Any broken toys or equipment will also be removed.
- The outdoor play space will be checked for safety hazards and any garbage found in the playground will be properly disposed of prior to the children entering the playground.
- The outdoor play space is enclosed with a fence, with two gates that are locked on each end of the play space. The gate is unlocked during operating hours but is closed at all times.
- Outdoor play structures comply with the Canadian Standards Association.
- No toxic plants or weeds are permitted to grow in the outdoor play space.
- Wading pools are drained and kept in an upright position for storage when not in use.
- Sandboxes are covered when not in use.

A playground safety checklist is used to guide staff through the safety measures and precautions prior to allowing children into the outdoor play space.

## Bullying

Bullying is the behaviour by one person or group which is intended to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation and/or degradation to another person or group.

### **Principles**

- Bullying is not acceptable in any form;
- All children have the right to an after school care program free from fear, harassment or degradation;
- Bullying is a problem for both the bully *and* the victim; and
- Best outcomes follow when children can work with staff and parents to address concerns about bullying behaviour and victimization.

### **Prevention**

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care has a **zero tolerance** attitude toward bullying and everyone (parents and staff) have a responsibility to deal with incidences of bullying.

In the first instance of bullying, we will follow the Child Guidance Policy and Procedure.

### **Anti-Bullying Procedures**

- Parents, Staff and the Director will discuss the area of concern and try to discover the possible cause;
- The parent will be reassured that it is the behaviour and not the child that is inappropriate and unacceptable;
- A plan will be developed between the Parents, Staff and Director to work together in the home and the centre which will be reviewed on a regular basis. Timing of these reviews is to be mutually agreed upon between the parties;
- Involvement of outside agencies for advice and practical help will be sought if necessary.

## Front Door Entry

Your child's safety is our utmost concern at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care. It is our policy that our facility will only be accessible to parents/guardians picking up children enrolled the centre. Visitors to the facility will be able to get access to the building by ringing the facility's front doorbell.

The front door of our facility is key fob entry only and is only accessible from Monday to Friday, between the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. You may only access the building upon scanning the key fob at the scanner located at the front entrance of the building.

Every parent is required to pay a non-refundable fee to obtain a key for the building. The fee is \$15.00 per key. Upon receipt of payment, we will provide you with a key which will be registered in the name of the key holder.

If you lose or misplace your key you will be required to obtain a replacement at a cost of \$15.00

Please advise our office immediately if you lose or misplace your key so that we may deactivate it remotely.

You are not permitted to provide this key to any unauthorized or unfamiliar person. If, on occasion, you will be sending someone other than yourself to pick up your child, in addition to advising a staff member that you will be sending this person, we ask that you do not provide that person with the key as they will be able to gain entry to the facility by ringing the doorbell. This is to ensure that all proper protocol is followed when a child is picked up by a person not familiar to the staff members.

## Handbook Review

This handbook will be reviewed and updated annually. This review will incorporate changes with staff and parental input and management consent towards an improved program. The annual Parent Survey will be a great help in helping us continually review and update our policies and procedures as outlined herein.