



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

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to our centre. Our goal is to ensure that your experience with us is both positive and rewarding. This Parent Handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about our centre's philosophy, policies, and procedures.

We encourage you to take the time to become familiar with its contents, as it will serve as a helpful guide throughout your time with us. Should you have any questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Director.

We look forward to building a strong and supportive partnership with you and your family.

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:	info@heritagevalleydaycare.com
Website:	www.heritagevalleydaycare.com

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 10 separate rooms divided by age for children ages 6 months to 12 years old.

Mission Statement & Vision

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive. We welcome children from infancy through school age, offering experiences that encourage social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Our goal is to inspire a lifelong love of learning by creating stimulating and caring opportunities that support each child's individual growth. We are equally committed to supporting our educators, recognizing that their professional development directly benefits the children in our care. Through ongoing training and education, our educators continue to strengthen their skills, deepen their understanding, and enhance the quality of care they provide.

We are proud to serve our families and community by fostering trusting relationships, supporting children's unique needs, and contributing to the development of highly skilled early childhood educators. In doing so, we aim to create a lasting, positive impact for children, families, and the broader community.

Our Program Philosophy

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our program is guided by the philosophy of **learning through play**. We believe children learn best when they are actively engaged in meaningful play experiences. Play allows children to absorb knowledge, acquire new skills, and develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Our role is to provide an environment that not only encourages play but also enriches it, expanding each child's learning while ensuring their safety and well-being.

A Child-Centered Environment

Our centre embraces an open-minded, child-oriented approach. Educators build on the unique ideas, interests, and spontaneous moments that arise from children's play. Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) support children by:

- Helping them express their interests and ideas
- Structuring environments around age-appropriate choices
- Playing alongside children to extend their learning
- Encouraging children to reflect on the effects of their choices
- Guiding children toward new concepts and related interests

Partnership with Families

We believe the best care comes from a strong partnership between families and educators. Mutual respect, trust, and cooperation are at the heart of this relationship. Families are a child's first and most important teachers, and children thrive when their families, educators, and community work together in harmony.

Parent involvement is encouraged and welcomed. Weekly and monthly programming is designed not only to build on what children learn at home but also to introduce them to new concepts, diverse cultures, and inclusive perspectives. By working together, we promote understanding, respect, and acceptance of all people.

Developmental Goals

Our programming is designed to nurture the whole child, with goals in the following areas of development:

- **Social:** Children are encouraged to form friendships, develop positive relationships, practice problem-solving and conflict resolution, and engage in cooperative group experiences. Educators model respectful interactions across all age groups.
- **Physical:** Both indoor and outdoor play support the development of large motor skills, coordination, and self-help skills.
- **Intellectual:** Children are encouraged to explore, experiment, and try new things. Programming supports emergent literacy, numeracy, science, and language development.

- **Creative:** Opportunities for self-expression are provided through art, music, drama, and imaginative play. Materials and props encourage creativity, exploration, and discovery.
- **Emotional:** We support children in building self-confidence, independence, and self-control. Positive coping strategies are introduced, and children are guided in developing resilience while enjoying their time in our care.

Code of Ethics

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our educators are guided by principles that ensure every child and family feels safe, supported, and respected. In simple terms, this means:

- **We care for your child's health, safety, and happiness.**
- **We create environments that help children learn and grow at their own pace.**
- **We treat every child with kindness, respect, and compassion.**
- **We see parents as partners and value your role as your child's first teachers.**
- **We collaborate with colleagues and community partners to support families.**
- **We respect the dignity and uniqueness of every child and family.**
- **We keep learning as professionals so we can provide the best care possible.**
- **We act with honesty, fairness, and integrity in everything we do.**

Together, these commitments reflect our promise to provide your family with quality care in a nurturing and trustworthy environment.

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.**

- **Arrival Time** – Children must be dropped off by 9:30 a.m. so that educators can smoothly transition into the daily routine. If you expect to arrive after 9:30 a.m., please send us a text message in advance to let us know. No drop offs are permitted during nap time (12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.). **For safety reasons, children must always be dropped off at the centre – drop offs at off site locations (e.g. the park) are not permitted.**
- **Pick-Up Time** – Parents are asked to pick up their children by **5:45 p.m.** to allow staff time to clean, organize, and prepare for the next day.
- **Late Fees** – Late pick-up fees apply after **6:00 p.m.**

Statutory Holidays and Centre Closures

Our centre is closed on all statutory holidays, as well as from **December 24 to January 1** each year for the holiday season. Closure notices are shared in monthly newsletters and posted throughout the centre in advance.

The following statutory holidays are observed:

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

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the centre will close on a designated weekday in lieu.

Professional Development Days

To ensure our educators remain current with best practices, the centre closes for **two Professional Development (PD) Days each year**. These closures give our team time for training and continued education, which directly benefits the quality of care provided to your child.

Admission and Registration

Spaces at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care are offered on a **first-come, first-served basis** and according to available capacity. When the centre is full, new enrolments are filled from our **waitlist of eligible children**, with consideration given to maintaining balanced age groupings.

Please note that **spaces cannot be held** for children who leave the centre during the summer months or for extended absences during the year. If you would like to secure your child's spot during an absence, please speak directly with the Director or Assistant Director.

Your child's **registration package** contains essential information needed to support their care. To ensure we can reach you quickly if necessary, it is very important that all forms are filled out completely and accurately. Families must also notify the office of any changes to contact details, addresses, emergency contacts, or other relevant information.

Fees and Payment Policy

- **Fee Schedule** – Monthly fees are set according to the centre’s current fee schedule at the time of registration. Fees may be adjusted with **one (1) month’s written notice**.
- **Absences and Closures** – Fees remain in effect regardless of absences due to illness, vacation, or unexpected centre closures.
- **Payment Due Dates** – Fees are due on the **1st business day of each month**.
- **Late Payments** – A late fee of **\$10 per day, per child** will be applied to payments made after the 1st of the month until the balance has been paid.
- **Non-Payment** – Failure to pay fees in full may result in **immediate dismissal from the centre**.

Methods of Payment

- **Monthly Fees** – All monthly fees must be paid through **Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD)**. A PAD Agreement is included in the Registration Package and must be completed prior to your child’s start date.
- **Other Fees** – Additional charges (such as registration fees, late fees, or special event fees) may be paid via **e-transfer** to:  **info@heritagevalleydaycare.com**

Please ensure all payments are made on time to avoid late fees or interruption of care.

Collections for Outstanding Fees or Other Amounts Owning

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is committed to working with families to ensure fees are paid on time. If accounts remain unpaid, the centre may use the services of a **third-party collection agency** to recover outstanding fees or other amounts owing.

By registering your child at our centre, you authorize Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care to release the necessary information to a third-party collection agency for the purpose of collecting unpaid amounts.

Transition Policy

Starting child care is a big step, and we want each child’s transition to be as smooth and positive as possible. Families should anticipate that the adjustment period may take several days. Our educators will support both you and your child during this time, while also maintaining the daily routines of the classroom.

- Parents may stay with their child in the classroom for up to a maximum of **30 minutes** during the first week of their child’s transition into the classroom.
- During this time, children are encouraged to begin joining their peers in play while the parent remains nearby. This allows the child to explore the environment and build trust with the educators, while still having the comfort of their parent close by.
- Parents are welcome to step in and out of the room during transition times to reassure their child that departures are temporary and that they will always return.

All transition times must be completed by 9:30 a.m. so that educators can begin the daily routine without disruption.

Children must be fully registered and officially starting at the centre to participate in the transition process.

Arrivals, Departure & Attendance

Safe and consistent arrival and departure routines help keep all children secure and ensure our programs run smoothly. Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from the centre and must follow the procedures outlined below.

Parking Lot Safety

Please use the parking lot provided and reinforce safe practices by ensuring that your child:

- **Does not walk or run unattended** in the parking lot.
- **Is accompanied into the centre** and brought directly to their classroom.
- **Is never left outside unattended.**

Arrival and Departure Procedures

- Parents must bring their child into the classroom and **notify the educator** that the child has arrived.
- At pick-up, parents (or authorized persons) must **notify the educator** and ensure safe departure.
- Children will only be released to individuals listed as **authorized pick-up persons**.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Times

- **Drop-Off Window:** Children must arrive between **6:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.** to allow our programs to begin on schedule. If your child will be arriving after 9:30 a.m., or has an appointment in the morning, please text or call and let us know.
- **Off Site Activities and Nap Time:** No drop offs will be permitted during off site activities or nap time (12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.).
- **Pick-Up:** Children may be picked up at any time before **5:45 p.m.** (with late fees applying after 6:00 p.m., as outlined in the fee policy).

Absences

If your child will be absent, please notify the centre by phone or email no later than **10:00 a.m.** This helps us plan our staffing and programming for the day.

Authorized Pick Up Policy

The safety of every child is our top priority. Children will only be released to individuals who are **authorized by the parent/guardian**.

Authorized Pick-Up Methods

A child may be released to:

- An individual listed on the **registration form** as an authorized pick-up person.
- An individual named in a **written note from the parent/guardian**.
- An individual noted in the **communication book**.
- An individual identified through a **phone call from the parent/guardian**.

Parents are asked to give staff **advance notice** whenever someone different will be picking up their child.

Photo Identification

- Anyone unfamiliar to staff must present **valid photo identification** before a child will be released.
- Please notify all authorized pick-up persons that they will be asked for photo ID.
- If no prior notice has been given, staff may call a parent/guardian to verify authorization before releasing the child.

Restrictions

- Children will **not** be released to anyone under the age of 18.
- Children will **not** be released to any individual who appears intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.
- If a release is refused for safety reasons, staff will work with the parent/guardian to arrange an alternate authorized pick-up at the parent's expense.

Custody and Court Orders

If there are custody agreements or court orders that affect pick-up arrangements, a copy must be provided to the centre. Without proper documentation, we are legally obligated to release children to either parent/guardian.

Affordability Grant

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care participates in the **Alberta Affordability Grant Program**, which provides direct funding to licensed child care centres to help reduce fees for families

This grant is automatically applied to your monthly fees, so you do not need to apply. The grant automatically applies to all children from 0 – Kindergarten. Children in Grades 1-6 are not eligible for the Affordability Grant.

The Affordability Grant is **separate from the Child Care Subsidy**. Families who qualify for subsidy will see both the subsidy and the grant applied to their monthly fees.

Subsidy

Families with children in Grades 1- 6 may be eligible for the **Government of Alberta Child Care Subsidy**.

Eligibility and Application

- To determine eligibility and apply, please visit the Government of Alberta Child Care Subsidy webpage.
- To receive maximum subsidy **Out of School Care children** must attend at least **50 hours per month**.

If your child does not meet the minimum attendance hours, the centre will not receive the full subsidy and you will be responsible for paying the difference in fees.

Subsidy must be **approved before your child begins care**. Proof of approval must be provided to the office.

If you choose to start care before approval is received, you will be required to pay the **full monthly fee**. Any subsidy that applies will be credited on the following month's invoice once approval is confirmed.

Families are responsible for keeping their subsidy **valid and up to date**.

If your subsidy expires or lapses, you must pay the **full fee** until proof of renewal is provided.

The subsidy office can be very busy. To avoid delays, please submit all renewal documents at least **one month before** your subsidy expires. Late submissions may result in a lapse in coverage and could require an appeal.

We are happy to assist families with subsidy applications or renewals. If you need help completing the online application or submitting documents by email or fax, please speak with the Director or Assistant Director in the office.

Open Door Policy

Parent and Visitor Policy

Parents are always welcome to visit their children at the centre throughout the day. We encourage family involvement and understand the importance of maintaining close connections.

Guidelines for Visits

- If a visit becomes disruptive to the group, educators may ask that you spend time with your child in an alternate area of the centre.
- Please notify staff if you take your child out of the classroom and let them know when your child has returned.
- All visitors are expected to respect classroom rules and daily routines.

Non-Parent Visitors

- If someone other than a parent/guardian will be visiting your child, **advance parental/guardian approval is required**.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a calm, safe, and respectful learning environment for all children.

Smoking and Vaping Policy

To ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children, families, and staff, **smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited** anywhere on the centre premises.

- A **No Smoking** sign is posted at the front entry, and this policy will be strictly enforced.
- In accordance with **City of Edmonton bylaws**, smoking and vaping are also not permitted within **5 metres of any entrance** to the centre.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a clean and healthy environment for all.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Cannabis Policy

The safety and well-being of the children in our care is our highest priority. For this reason:

- The use, possession, or distribution of **illegal drugs, alcohol, or cannabis** is strictly prohibited on centre property or during any centre-related activities (including field trips and special events).
- Individuals who appear to be **under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or cannabis** will not be permitted to remain on the premises.
- Children will **not** be released to any individual who appears to be impaired. In such cases, staff will contact the child's parent/guardian or an alternate authorized pick-up person.
- Staff are required to immediately report any violations of this policy to the Director.

This policy applies to all staff, parents, guardians, visitors, volunteers, and contractors.

Withdrawal Policy

To withdraw a child from the centre, families must provide **one (1) full calendar month's written notice**.

- **Notice Deadline** – Notice must be given **on or before the 1st of the month**.
 - Example: If a child's last day will be **June 30**, notice must be provided **by June 1**.
 - If notice is given **after the 1st of the month**, it will be treated as notice for the following month.
 - Example: Notice given on **May 15** for withdrawal on **June 15** will be considered effective **June 1**, and full fees for June will still be required.
- **No Notice** – If no notice is provided, families will be charged **one month's full fees** (calculated before any operating grant or subsidy deductions). These fees must be paid before the child's last day.
- **Outstanding Balances** – All fees owing to the centre must be paid in full prior to a child's last day. Accounts with unpaid balances will be referred to a **third-party collection agency**.

Termination of Enrolment by the Centre

Termination of Services

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our goal is to work in partnership with families to support each child's success. However, in some cases, it may be determined that our centre is not the best fit for a child's needs.

If we determine that we are unable to meet your child's needs, we will provide one (1) calendar month's written notice. During this time, we will make every effort to support your family in finding an alternate child care arrangement.

In situations where we believe that your child's well-being may be compromised due to our inability to meet their needs, the notice period may be shorter than one (1) calendar month.

Immediate Termination

Immediate termination of child care services is considered a last resort and is at the discretion of the Director. Circumstances that may result in immediate termination include:

- Any form of **abuse or threatening behavior** toward staff members or children.
- **Non-payment of fees**, following prior notices and continued failure to resolve outstanding balances.

Refunds

Refunds in the event of immediate termination are at the discretion of the Director. Please note:

- If termination is due to **abuse of staff or children**, no refund will be issued.
- In other cases, the Director may determine whether a refund is appropriate.

Communication with Parents

Open communication between families and our centre is essential to providing quality care for your child. We encourage parents to share information, ask questions, and provide feedback regularly.

Ways to Communicate

Parents may contact the centre or their child's educators in the following ways:

- **In person** – Speak directly with your child's educator or a Supervisor during drop-off or pick-up.
- **By phone** – Call the centre to relay messages or ask questions.
- **By email** – Send messages or documents to the centre's email address.
- **Parent Message Book** – Write a note in the designated parent communication book located in your child's room.

We value your input and strive to keep communication open, respectful, and supportive.

Vacations & Extended Absences

If your child will be away from the centre for an extended period of time (such as a vacation or family leave), please provide at least **one (1) week's notice** to the office.

Please note that **fees remain in effect** during absences, whether due to illness, vacation, or other personal reasons.

Your advance notice helps us plan staffing and programming appropriately while maintaining your child's space in the program.

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 recent police security clearances when starting work at our centre. It is also a policy at our centre that 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 **play-based learning environment**. Educators develop program plans based on children's interests, which help guide and extend their learning through play.

Programming is designed not only to supplement what children learn outside the centre, but also to introduce them to **new concepts, cultures, and experiences**. We strive to foster curiosity, respect, and acceptance of diversity. Parent input and involvement in programming is always encouraged and valued.

Involvement of Children and Families in Planning

We believe that children and families are an important part of our program planning.

- **Open Door Policy** – Parents are welcome to visit their children at any time.
- **Special Events & Field Trips** – Families are invited to participate, and we welcome suggestions for new activities.
- **Parent Feedback** – Families may be asked to complete questionnaires about how well the centre is meeting their needs. Feedback helps us improve our programs and services.
- **Ways to Share Ideas** – Parents can share their thoughts at any time through:
 - Direct communication with the Director or educators
 - Telephone calls
 - Emails

- Our suggestion box

Timesavr

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care uses **Timesavr**, an online communication platform, to keep families informed and engaged in their child's daily experiences at the centre. Timesavr allows us to share important updates, reminders, and individualized daily reports in a timely and efficient manner.

Purpose of Timesavr

- To provide parents/guardians with **daily reports** about their child's meals, naps, activities, and overall well-being.
- To share **centre-wide announcements and reminders**, such as upcoming events, closures, or special programming.
- To allow for quick and direct **two-way communication** between parents and educators.

Guidelines for Use

- Parents will receive their child's **daily report** through Timesavr.
- Parents may send messages through Timesavr's **text line**; however, **photos cannot be sent through the text feature**. If you wish to share photos or documents, please send them directly via email to the centre.
- Educators will use Timesavr during the day to communicate non-urgent matters. Urgent issues will continue to be handled via phone call.
- Families are encouraged to check Timesavr daily to stay up to date on their child's care and centre activities.

Confidentiality

- All communication through Timesavr is kept confidential and accessible only to the child's family and centre staff.
- Reports will not be shared with anyone other than the child's parent/guardian unless written consent is provided.

Our Commitment

By using Timesavr, we aim to strengthen the home–centre connection, ensuring that families are always informed, supported, and included in their child's early learning journey.

Rooms, Daily Items and Daily Routines

Rooms and Staff-Child Ratios

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is made up of 10 separate rooms based on the children's ages: Infants, Toddlers, Preschool, Pre-K, Kindergarten and Out of School Care.

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

Age of Children

Play Time

Nap Time

	(Staff:Child)	(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

To help your child have a safe and comfortable day, please ensure they arrive dressed appropriately and with the required items listed below.

General Guidelines

- Children should wear **comfortable play clothes** suitable for an active, busy day. Please avoid sending special or delicate clothing, as children may be involved in messy activities.
- **Indoor shoes** (soft-soled, non-marking) are required for all children.
- Children must be dressed appropriately for the weather, as outdoor play is part of our daily routine (raincoats, snowsuits, hats, etc.).
- During summer months, parents must provide **sunscreen** and **insect repellent** to be kept in the child's cubby.
- Please **label all items** with your child's name. While staff do their best to keep track of belongings, we cannot be responsible for lost or misplaced items.
- If an item is missing or needed, a text message will be sent to parents.
- For safety reasons, **earrings** which may fall off or **necklaces** which may become entangled are **not permitted** to be worn.

Daycare Children:

Children enrolled in daycare require the following:

- Disposable diapers, wipes, creams, etc. (if applicable)
- Spare clothing (two sets if your child is potty training)
- Indoor shoes
- A comfort item (such as a soft toy for nap time)

- A family photo for our Family Board
- For children under 19 months: all milk/formula and food for the day
- Sippy cup or refillable water bottle
- **Seasonal items:**
 - Summer – Sunblock, hat, mosquito repellent
 - Winter – Boots, mittens, hat, coat, snowsuit

 **Important:** Alberta Health prohibits the use of **baby powder** in child care facilities due to the risk of inhalation. Please do not send baby powder with your child.

Out of School Care Children:

Children enrolled in Out of School Care require the following:

- Indoor shoes
- Refillable water bottle
- Daily lunch (for summer months and school closure days)m
- **Seasonal items:**
 - Summer – Sunblock, hat, mosquito repellent
 - Winter – Boots, mittens, hat, coat, snowsuit

Toys and Items from Home

Our program provides a wide variety of toys and materials that:

- Foster creativity and imagination
- Encourage role play and self-expression
- Support language development
- Build social and cooperative play skills
- Promote motor development
- Encourage positive values such as acceptance and equality

Because toy selection plays a key role in how children interact in groups, we ask that **personal toys not be brought to the centre**. The only exception is a **soft, cuddly toy or blanket** that may be used during rest time for comfort.

Special Occasions

On certain days (such as theme days, celebrations, or “show and share”), children may be invited to bring a special toy or book from home. Educators will communicate in advance what types of items are permitted for these occasions, based on program planning.

Responsibility for Personal Belongings

The centre cannot be responsible for personal items that are brought from home. By enrolling your child at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, you acknowledge that the centre is **not liable for lost or damaged belongings**.

Daily Routines

Our daily routines provide children with a sense of structure and security, while remaining flexible to meet their individual needs and interests. Each group has its own established routine that may be adapted to reflect the developmental stage of the children and any spontaneous learning opportunities that arise.

Activities

Throughout the day, children have access to a wide variety of play and learning experiences, including:

- Push toys and manipulative toys
- Books and storytelling materials
- Arts and crafts supplies
- Water and sand tables
- Group games and cooperative play

Posted Schedules

Daily routines for each group are **posted in the classroom** so that parents can review them at any time. These routines help children feel comfortable and provide balance between active and quiet play, group and individual activities, and indoor and outdoor experiences.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of our program and takes place every day, **weather permitting**. We strongly encourage families to send children in clothing appropriate for the conditions outside (e.g., raincoats, boots, snowsuits, sun hats).

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care has three outdoor play spaces attached to the centre and also makes use of 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 ensure children are comfortable and safe outdoors, we ask that families send their child with **appropriate seasonal clothing** (e.g., hats, mittens, warm jackets, snow boots, rain gear, or sun hats). If your child is wearing a winter jacket, please remove any drawstrings from the hood, as these can pose a safety hazard by catching on playground equipment.

Outdoor Play Restrictions

For the safety and well-being of the children, outdoor play will not take place under the following conditions:

- **Extreme cold:** Temperatures below **-20°C with wind chill** (or below **-15°C** for children under 19 months).
- **Inclement weather:** Snowstorms, heavy rain, or other hazardous conditions.
- **Poor air quality:** Smoky conditions (e.g., due to wildfires).
- **Extreme sun/UV exposure:** During the summer months, when the **UV Index is higher than 7**, outdoor play will be avoided between **11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.** Precautions such as shade and sunscreen use will also be followed in accordance with Environment Canada guidelines.

Playground Safety

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, the safety of children during outdoor play is our top priority. Our play spaces are securely enclosed at all times, with gates locked during centre closure hours. When children are outside, educators position themselves strategically throughout the playground to ensure active supervision.

The outdoor play space for **Infants and Toddlers** is separate from that of the **Preschool, Kindergarten, and Out of School Care** children. Each area offers age-appropriate activities designed to meet the developmental needs and interests of the children.

Playground Safety Procedures

To maintain a safe outdoor environment, staff follow these precautions:

- **Daily inspection:** Before children enter the playground, a staff member inspects the area for broken glass, hazardous objects, or damaged toys/equipment.
- **Hazard removal:** Any garbage or unsafe items are removed and disposed of before children are permitted to enter.
- **Secure fencing:** The outdoor play space is enclosed with a fence and equipped with two gates. Gates remain closed at all times and are unlocked only during operating hours.
- **Safe equipment:** All outdoor play structures comply with **Canadian Standards Association (CSA)** safety standards.
- **No toxic plants:** Staff ensure that no harmful plants or weeds are present in the play space.
- **Water safety:** Wading pools are drained and stored upright when not in use.
- **Sandbox care:** Sandboxes are covered when not in use to maintain cleanliness and safety.

Staff use a **Playground Safety Checklist** daily to ensure all measures are consistently followed before children are allowed to play outdoors.

Health and Hygiene

Nap/Rest Time

Rest is an important part of every child's growth and development. Our centre provides scheduled rest times that balance children's individual needs with the daily routine of each age group.

Infants and Toddlers (12 months and up)

- Rest time begins around **11:45 a.m.** and continues until children naturally wake.
- Infants under 12 months follow their **own individual sleep schedules** and are permitted to nap as needed throughout the day.

Preschool (3–5 years)

- Rest time is from **12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**
- Children are encouraged to lie or sit quietly on their mats so those who wish to nap may do so.
- Non-napping children will be provided with quiet activities on their mats or at a table.
- Children who continue sleeping after 2:00 p.m. will be permitted to wake naturally.

Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Out of School Care

- These age groups do **not have a scheduled nap time** but may have quiet rest or relaxation periods.

Sleep Practices

We understand that nap time may sometimes affect children's evening sleep routines at home. However, in keeping with best practices for child development:

- We will **not wake children early** from naps.
- We will **not prevent children from napping** if they are tired.
- Children are supported in following their natural sleep needs during the rest period.
- Children are not permitted to have any drinks on their mat. If a child requires milk before nap, they may drink it at the table before going to sleep.

Nutrition and Menu

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we are committed to providing children with nutritious meals and snacks that support their growth and development. All food provided meets **Canada's Food Guide** standards for nutrition and portion sizes.

Meals and Snacks Provided

- **Daycare Children (19 months–Kindergarten):** Morning snack, hot lunch, and afternoon snack.
- **Out of School Care Children:** Morning snack and afternoon snack.

Meal times are as follows (with adjustments for children returning from school):

- **AM Snack** – 8:30 a.m.

- **Lunch** – 11:00 a.m. (for Kindergarten children – before/after school)
- **PM Snack** – 2:30 p.m.

If you feel your child requires additional snacks outside of these times, you are welcome to send **supplementary snacks** from home.

Menu Planning

- Menus are **posted in each classroom and the kitchen**.
- Menus rotate on a **four-week basis** and are updated **seasonally**.
- Parents may request a copy of the menu at any time.

Food from Home

Parents may send food for their child, provided it follows these guidelines:

- Each classroom is equipped with a **fridge and microwave** for storage and reheating.
- Please do **not** send food that requires cooking in the microwave or a can opener (e.g., instant noodles, mac and cheese, canned soup).
- All food must be **labeled with your child's name**.
- Our centre is a **nut-free environment** – please do not send any food containing nuts.
- Parents are asked not to send **soda, candy, or other sugary treats**.

Infants and Children with Dietary Needs

- Parents are responsible for providing **all food and drinks** for infants until 19 months of age.
- After 19 months, children will be served from the centre's menu. Families who wish for their child to eat more than what is provided may send extra snacks.
- If your child has **multiple food allergies or dietary restrictions**, you may be asked to provide all meals and snacks from home to ensure safety.

Mealtime Practices

Meals and snacks are treated as an important **social activity**. Children are encouraged to remain seated, eat calmly, and enjoy meals together in a respectful, positive environment.

Infant Feeding and Sleeping

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we recognize that infants require individualized care that reflects their home routines. We work closely with families to ensure consistency and comfort for each child.

Feeding

- Parents are asked to provide a **written note of their infant's daily routine**, including eating and sleeping patterns. Educators will follow the home routine until the child is ready to transition to the centre's schedule.

- Infants under **6 months of age** will always be **held by staff while being bottle-fed**. Once a child is developmentally ready, they may hold the bottle independently.
- Parents are responsible for providing all **food and drinks for children aged 0–19 months**.

Sleeping

- Infants who are not yet able to roll over independently will always be placed on their **backs for sleep**, following safe sleep practices.
- All sleeping infants are **monitored at all times** by staff.

By working together with families, we aim to provide infants with a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment that supports healthy growth.

Cleaning & Sanitizing

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of **health, safety, and cleanliness** for all children, families, and staff.

To support this, our educators and staff follow strict cleaning and sanitizing procedures, guided by Alberta Health Services recommendations and licensing requirements.

Safety and Cleaning Practices

We use a series of checklists to ensure consistency and accountability, including:

- **Playground Safety Checklist** – Completed regularly to ensure outdoor play areas are safe and hazard-free.
- **Room Safety Checklist** – Used to confirm classrooms are clean, safe, and well-maintained.
- **Daily Cleaning Checklist** – Covers routine cleaning of toys, surfaces, washrooms, and common areas.
- **Weekly Cleaning Checklist** – Includes deep cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms, equipment, and shared spaces.

These measures help reduce the spread of illness, provide a healthy environment, and ensure that children can learn and play safely each day.

Handwashing

Proper handwashing is one of the most effective ways to protect the health and safety of children and staff by reducing the spread of germs and bacteria.

Facilities

- Each classroom is equipped with a **sink with running water**.
- **Liquid hand soap** and **paper towel dispensers** are available for both children and staff.

- **Hand sanitizer** is provided for staff use when handwashing with soap and water is not immediately possible.

Practices

Children and staff are supported in practicing **regular and proper handwashing**, including:

- Before and after meals and snacks
- After outdoor play
- After using the washroom or assisting with toileting
- After wiping noses, coughing, or sneezing
- Anytime hands are visibly dirty

By teaching and modeling these routines, we help children develop healthy habits that will benefit them both inside and outside the centre.

Food Safety

To ensure the health and safety of all children, staff who are responsible for preparing food at the centre are required to complete a **Food Sanitation and Hygiene course** through **Alberta Health Services**.

This training ensures that staff:

- Understand proper food handling, storage, and preparation practices
- Maintain safe kitchen and serving environments
- Follow strict hygiene procedures to prevent cross-contamination and the spread of foodborne illness

By meeting these standards, we can confidently provide nutritious meals and snacks in a safe and healthy environment.

Allergy & Nut-Free Policy

The safety of all children is our top priority. Some children in our care have **life-threatening allergies to peanuts and other nuts**. To ensure a safe environment for everyone, Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is a **PEANUT- AND NUT-FREE CENTRE**.

- Any food brought to the centre—by children, families, or staff—**must not contain peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, tree nuts, or nut oils**.
- Please check all food labels carefully before sending items with your child.
- Foods that are not clearly labeled or that contain nuts will not be permitted in the classroom.

We thank all families for their cooperation in helping us maintain a safe environment for children with severe allergies.

Food and Treats Policy

To support food safety standards and reduce allergen risks:

- Homemade treats may not be shared with other children in the centre. Parents may send homemade food only for their own child.
- For special occasions (e.g., birthdays), treats must be **store-bought, nut-free, and include a full ingredient list.**

Potty Training Policy

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we recognize that potty training is an important developmental milestone. Our goal is to support children and families through this process in a positive, respectful, and consistent manner.

Readiness

Children begin potty training at different ages and stages. We ask parents to discuss with educators when they believe their child is ready to start. Signs of readiness may include:

- Showing awareness of being wet or soiled.
- Communicating the need to use the toilet.
- Staying dry for longer periods; and
- Expressing interest in using the toilet or wearing underwear.

Centre Expectations

- Parents and educators will work together to create a consistent routine for the child at home and at the centre.
- Families must provide **several full changes of clothing** each day, including socks, as accidents are expected.
- Pull-ups or training underwear must be used during the initial stages to ensure safety and hygiene at the centre.
- Educators will encourage and support children with patience, positivity, and without pressure.
- Children will never be disciplined for accidents; they are part of the learning process.
- Educators will assist children in changing clothing when accidents occur and will practice proper hygiene and handwashing routines.

Transitioning from Pull-Ups to Underwear

To support a smooth transition, children may begin wearing underwear at the centre once the following criteria are consistently met:

- The child must remain dry for the **entire day** at the centre in pull-ups for at least **two consecutive weeks** (excluding nap time – see below for nap time policy).
- The child must be able to **communicate (verbally or non-verbally)** when they need to use the toilet.

- The child is willing to sit on the toilet when encouraged by educators.
- The child must be **fully trained at home**, including during outings, before transitioning to underwear at the centre.

Return to Pull-Ups Policy

If a child has **more than one accident in underwear in a single day**, they will be required to return to pull-ups until they meet the readiness criteria again. This ensures consistency, minimizes classroom disruptions, and supports children's success.

Nap Times

Children must continue to wear pull-ups during nap/rest periods until they consistently wake up dry for at least **two weeks in a row**.

Family's Role

- Parents are expected to start the potty training process at home before introducing it at the centre.
- Consistency is key: families should maintain the same expectations and routines at home and at the centre.
- Families must ensure their child arrives each day with an adequate supply of extra clothes, pull-ups/underwear, and any creams or wipes needed.

Hygiene

Educators will ensure that all children wash their hands after each toilet attempt. Toilets, sinks, and change areas will be sanitized regularly in accordance with our health and hygiene policies.

Scent Sensitive Policy

At Heritage Valley Early Learning and Out of School Care, the health and well-being of our children, families, and staff is our top priority. To ensure a safe and comfortable environment for everyone, our centre is a **scent-sensitive space**.

Why this policy is important

Strong fragrances and scented products (such as perfumes, colognes, body sprays, strongly scented lotions, essential oils, and cleaning products brought from home) can trigger allergic reactions, headaches, asthma, and other sensitivities in children and adults.

Expectations for Families, Visitors, and Staff

- Please avoid wearing or applying perfumes, colognes, body sprays, hair oils, or other scented personal products when entering the centre.
- Do not bring in toys, blankets, or clothing that carry strong scents (such as laundry products, air fresheners, or scented oils).
- Essential oils, diffusers, or plug-in air fresheners are not permitted in the centre.

Commitment to Inclusion and Safety

This policy is not meant to be restrictive, but to ensure that all individuals—especially those with asthma, allergies, or scent sensitivities—can participate in our program safely and comfortably. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a healthy, welcoming environment.

Health and Safety

SIDS

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we follow **safe sleep practices** to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

- All Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) working with infants under 12 months are trained in the care of young infants and are provided with detailed information regarding SIDS prevention.
- Infants who are not yet able to roll over on their own will always be placed on their **backs for sleep**.
- Sleeping infants are **monitored continuously** to ensure their safety.

These practices are in line with current health and safety recommendations to provide infants with a safe and nurturing sleep environment.

Immunizations

Alberta Child Care and Health regulations do not require centres to maintain up-to-date immunization records for all children. However, at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we **request this information to help support the health and well-being of all children, families, and staff in our program**.

Documentation

- Parents/guardians are asked to advise our centre as to whether their child's immunizations are up to date.
- Families who choose not to immunize must document this decision in their child's enrolment file.
- The purpose of keeping this information is to ensure that families can be promptly informed of any communicable disease outbreaks that may pose a higher risk to their child.

Outbreaks

- If a communicable disease outbreak occurs, Alberta Health Services may recommend that children who are not immunized (or not up to date on immunizations) be temporarily excluded from the program to reduce risk of exposure.
- Families will be notified immediately if this applies, and regular fees will remain in effect during this exclusion period.

Our Commitment

This policy is not intended to be discriminatory. Its purpose is to ensure transparency, protect children's health, and allow families to make informed decisions regarding their child's participation during outbreaks.

Illnesses and Exclusion Policy

Child care centres play an important role in helping to control the spread of illness. For this reason, children and staff are monitored daily for any signs or symptoms of illness.

When Children Must Stay Home

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

- **Vomiting** – child must remain home until symptom-free for **48 hours** without medication
- **Diarrhea** – child must remain home until symptom-free for **48 hours** without medication
- **Fever** – child must remain home until symptom-free for **24 hours** without medication
- **Unexplained rash** - child must stay home until the rash has cleared up or a doctor's note is provided indicating that the child is not contagious
- **Lice** – child must stay home until they have received their first treatment and there are no live nits in their hair
- **Pink eye** – child may return 24 hours after starting treatment
- Symptoms of a communicable illness or infection
- Extreme lethargy or inability to participate in the program

If a Child Becomes Ill at the Centre

- If a staff member suspects that a child is ill, the parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange for **immediate pick-up**.
- Children cannot return to the centre until they no longer pose a health risk to others. Acceptable evidence includes:
 - Being symptom-free for the required time (24–48 hours depending on the illness), or
 - A **doctor's note** confirming the child is fit to attend child care.

Illness Documentation

Staff will record all instances of illness in the classroom **Illness Record (Health & Medication Binder)**, which includes:

- Child's name
- Date and time illness was observed
- Name of staff who identified the illness
- Time and staff member who contacted the parent

- Time child was removed from the program
- Date the child returned to care

Communication with Families

- Parents will be notified first. If parents cannot be reached, the child's **emergency contacts** will be called.
- If a parent fails to pick up their child promptly or make alternate arrangements, a follow-up call will be made. Continued failure to arrange care may result in a **report to the local health authority or Child Protective Services**.

Outbreak Reporting

Child care centres are required to report suspected outbreaks to their local public health unit.

- An outbreak is defined as **two or more children with the same symptoms within a 48-hour period**.
- If a suspected outbreak occurs, staff will notify the Director, who will report the case to the public health unit and follow their instructions.

Hand, Foot and Mouth Policy

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFM) is a common, mild, but highly contagious viral infection most often seen in young children.

Symptoms

Common symptoms of HFM include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- Irritability
- Red bumps or blisters in the mouth, on the face, palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and sometimes on the buttocks

The incubation period is typically **3–6 days** before symptoms appear. Because children may be contagious before showing symptoms, HFM can spread quickly in a child care setting.

Exclusion from Care

If your child develops symptoms of HFM, they must remain home for a **minimum of 72 hours from the onset of symptoms**. They may return to the centre when all of the following conditions are met:

- They have been **fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication**
- All blisters are **flat, dry, and scabbed over** (no fluid-filled sores remain)
- They are **well enough to participate** fully in the program

These measures help reduce the spread of infection and keep our centre a safe and healthy place for all children.

⚠ Please note: A **doctor's note will not override these requirements**. Children must meet the above criteria before returning to care.

Incident/Accident Reports

The safety of your child is always our top priority. If your child requires first aid at the centre, or is involved in an incident that staff feel you should be aware of (for example, a scraped knee from a fall), an **Incident Report** will be completed.

- The report will outline what occurred, any first aid provided, and any follow-up action taken.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to **review and sign** the report to confirm they have been informed.

Confidentiality

If the incident involves another child, the identities of all children involved will remain **confidential**.

Parents are reminded that when children are in our care:

- **Child guidance is the responsibility of our educators.**
- Parents are **not permitted to speak to or discipline other children** in the program. If you have concerns, please speak with the Director or your child's educator.

This ensures that all children are treated with respect and that families can trust that matters will be handled fairly and professionally.

Biting

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we understand that biting can be a normal part of early childhood development, particularly for toddlers who are still learning language, self-regulation, and social skills. Our approach is to respond in a way that ensures the **safety of all children** while also supporting the developmental needs of each child involved.

Responding to Incidents

- Each biting incident is addressed individually, taking into account the child's age, developmental stage, and any underlying causes or triggers.
- Staff use **positive guidance, redirection, and social-emotional learning strategies** to help children express themselves in appropriate ways.
- Staff will closely **supervise and intervene** to minimize risk, and patterns or triggers will be tracked to help prevent recurrence.

Communication with Families

- Parents of both the child who bit and the child who was bitten will be informed through an **Incident Report**.

- The identities of all children involved will remain **confidential**.
- If biting persists, a **meeting will be scheduled with the family** to develop a collaborative action plan. Outside resources or consultations may be recommended to provide additional support.

Ongoing Support and Next Steps

Our team is committed to supporting children through challenging behaviours. However, **termination of care may be considered** if:

- Biting becomes frequent despite consistent intervention.
- Parents are unwilling to participate in the behaviour support process.
- The behaviour is deemed **developmentally inappropriate** for the child's age.

By working together with families, we aim to reduce biting behaviours while supporting all children in developing positive social skills.

Child Abuse Protocol

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, the safety and well-being of all children is our highest priority.

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 is legally required to **report the matter immediately to Child Intervention Services**.

How Reports Are Made

- Reports can be made by calling the **Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437**.
- Reports may also be made by contacting the **district office of Child Intervention Services** directly.
- For further details, please refer to the Government of Alberta publication: *Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Services*.

Our educators and staff are trained in recognizing and reporting concerns, and we take this responsibility seriously to ensure that children are always safe and protected.

Self-Reporting Policy

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is required by law to **self-report certain incidents** to the local **Child Care Licensing office** within **two (2) business days**. This ensures transparency, accountability, and the safety of all children in our care.

Incidents That Must Be Reported

The following types of incidents must be reported:

- An **emergency evacuation** of the centre
- An **unexpected centre closure**

- An **intruder** on the premises
- An illness that requires **emergency health care** and/or an **overnight hospital stay**
- An **error in medication administration** by staff or volunteers that results in illness, injury, first aid, emergency health care, or hospitalization
- The **death of a child**
- The **unexpected absence** of a child from the program (e.g., a lost child)
- A child being removed from the centre by a **non-custodial parent/guardian** or other unauthorized individual
- An allegation of **physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect** involving a staff member or volunteer
- The commission of an **offence** by a child under an Act of Canada or Alberta
- A child being **left on the premises outside of operating hours**

All such incidents are documented, reported to licensing as required, and reviewed internally to ensure the safety and well-being of every child in our program.

Insect Repellent and Sunscreen

To help protect children during outdoor play and excursions, all families are required to review and sign our **Insect Repellent and Sunscreen Policy** as part of the Registration Package.

Parent Responsibilities

- Parents must provide the centre with a **labeled bottle of sunscreen** and **labeled insect repellent** for their child.
- These items may be kept in the child's cubby for daily use.

Application

- Educators will apply sunscreen and insect repellent to your child prior to outdoor play or offsite excursions, following the directions provided on the product label.
- Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent to their child at home before drop-off, especially during the summer months, to ensure full coverage.

These measures help us ensure that children can enjoy outdoor play safely and comfortably.

Anti-Bullying Policy

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all children feel secure and valued.

Definition

Bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation, 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 negatively affects both the child engaging in the behaviour and the child being targeted.
- The best outcomes occur when children, parents, and staff work together to address concerns and support positive behaviour.

Prevention

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care maintains a **zero-tolerance approach** to bullying. Parents, staff, and children all share responsibility in promoting respect and addressing any incidents of bullying.

- On the **first instance of bullying**, educators will respond in accordance with the **Child Guidance Policy and Procedure**.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

When bullying behaviour is identified:

- Parents, staff, and the Director will meet to discuss the concern and explore possible underlying causes.
- Parents will be reassured that it is the **behaviour**—not the child—that is unacceptable.
- A collaborative plan will be developed between parents, staff, and the Director to address the behaviour at both the centre and at home. The plan will include specific strategies and a review schedule, mutually agreed upon by all parties.
- If necessary, outside agencies will be consulted to provide additional support, advice, or practical assistance.

Possible Consequences

If bullying behaviour continues despite intervention, or if it is severe in nature, the following consequences may be applied:

1. **Warning and Redirection** – The child will be reminded of expectations and redirected to more appropriate behaviour.
2. **Behaviour Support Plan** – Parents and staff will work together to create a formal plan with clear strategies and goals.
3. **Temporary Removal** – The child may be removed from group activities to ensure the safety and well-being of others.
4. **Suspension from Activities** – The child may lose the privilege of participating in certain activities (e.g., field trips, special events) if their behaviour poses a safety risk.
5. **Termination of Care** – If bullying becomes ongoing, severe, or resistant to interventions, the centre reserves the right to terminate the child's enrolment.

Termination is always a last resort and will only be considered after reasonable steps to support the child have been taken.

Health and Medication

First Aid and First Aid Kits

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, safety is our top priority. To ensure the well-being of all children:

- **All staff members** are required to hold a valid **First Aid Certificate** and to keep it up to date.
- Every classroom and the main office are equipped with a **fully stocked first aid kit** that is checked and replenished regularly.

These measures ensure that staff are always prepared to respond promptly and effectively to injuries or medical emergencies.

Medication Administration Policy and Procedure

Policy

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is committed to ensuring the safe administration of all prescribed medications, herbal remedies, and emergency medications (collectively referred to as “**Medication**” in this handbook).

Only **Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) with a valid First Aid Certificate** are permitted to administer Medication. Proper administration includes:

- Safe handling and storage
- Correct dosage
- Accurate timing
- Careful monitoring after administration

Procedures

1. Parental Consent

- Parents must provide written consent for the administration of any Medication by completing a **Medication Administration Form** (available from your child's ECE).
- A separate form must be completed for each Medication.
- Each form is valid for a maximum of **two (2) weeks**.

2. Medication Form Requirements

The form must include:

- Child's name
- Medication name

- Dosage to be given
- Expiry date of the Medication
- Start and end dates
- Exact time(s) Medication is to be given
- Special instructions (if any)
- Time Medication was last given at home prior to arrival at the centre
- Parent/guardian signature

3. **Storage of Medication**

- All Medication must be handed directly to a qualified staff member for storage.
- **Emergency Medication** will be stored in a clearly labeled container in the child's classroom, out of children's reach but accessible to staff.
- **Non-emergency Medication** will be stored in a **locked container** in the classroom.
- If refrigeration is required, the Medication will be kept in a locked container inside the classroom refrigerator.

4. **Medication on Field Trips/Excursions**

- Medication required for outings will be stored securely in a staff-only bag, accessible only to staff members.

5. **Original Containers Only**

- All Medication must be in the **original, labeled container** with clear directions for use.
- Medication will only be administered according to the directions on the original container label.
- Directions provided on the Medication Form must match the directions on the original container.

6. **Qualified Staff Administration**

- Only staff members holding a valid **First Aid Certificate** are permitted to administer Medication.

7. **Documentation**

- The staff member administering the Medication will sign the **Medication Form** to verify that it was given according to the directions on the container label.

8. **Monitoring for Reactions**

- After administration, staff will monitor the child for a minimum of **15 minutes** for any signs of an allergic or adverse reaction.

9. Allergic Reactions

- If an allergic reaction is suspected, staff will immediately contact the child's parent/guardian.
- If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the child's **emergency contact** will be called.

10. Parent Administration Before Arrival

- If a parent gives Medication to their child at home before arrival at the centre, they must record the time given and initial it on the **Medication Form**.

11. Expired or Unused Medication

- Staff will return any **expired or unused Medication** to the parent/guardian at the end of the authorization period or upon expiry.

Medical Devices

Some children may require the use of **medical devices** to support their health care needs. Medical devices include items such as **EpiPens, inhalers, stomach tubes, or other specialized equipment**.

Parent Responsibilities

- Parents must inform the centre if their child requires the use of a medical device.
- Parents are required to provide specific information about the child's medical condition and the care required.
- Parents must supply a **detailed written guide** outlining the purpose of the device, the method of administration, and any storage requirements.

Staff Training

- Parents may be asked to provide training to the staff who will be administering the device or supporting the child.
- Training should include:
 - The purpose of the device/medication
 - How to administer or use the device properly
 - Storage and safety requirements
- In some cases, a **demonstration** may be required to ensure staff are confident and competent in providing care.

Documentation

- Written records of the training provided will be kept in both the child's file and the staff training file.

- This ensures that all staff supporting the child have the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately in an emergency.

By working closely with families, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment for children who require specialized medical care.

Transportation of Children to School

Centre Vehicles

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care provides transportation for children to and from the following neighbourhood schools:

- **Johnny Bright School**
- **St. Thomas Aquinas School**

Use of Centre Vans

- Transportation is provided using our **Centre Vans** (the “Vans”).
- The centre holds an **Operating Authority Certificate** issued under the **Motor Transport Act** and complies with all requirements under the Act.
- All children transported in the Vans are **properly restrained with seat belts** at all times.
- A maximum of **10–13 children** will be transported in a Van at any given time.

The safety and well-being of every child is our top priority, and all transportation procedures are designed to meet or exceed regulatory standards.

Yellow Buses

The following schools have yellow bus service to our centre:

- Monsignor Fee Otterson
- Duggan

Transportation – Parent Responsibilities

Because our transportation schedule is very busy, it is essential that families keep the centre informed about their child’s transportation needs.

Parent Notification

- Parents must notify the centre if their child **does or does not require pick-up after school**.
- If your child is absent in the morning, you must call the centre to confirm whether they need **afternoon pick-up**. Otherwise, your child may be presumed absent for the entire day.

If a Child Does Not Arrive at Pick-Up

If a child is scheduled for pick-up but does not appear at the designated meeting place, staff will:

1. Contact the school to confirm whether the child was absent or picked up by a parent/guardian.
2. Contact the centre office to check for any messages from parents.
3. Contact the parents/guardians directly.

If, after **15 minutes from the school dismissal time**, the child's whereabouts remain unknown and parents/emergency contacts cannot be reached, **the police will be contacted immediately** to ensure the child's safety.

Transportation Agreements

Each year, parents are required to sign a **Transportation Agreement** in order for the centre to:

- Provide transportation to and from school using our Centre Vans, or
- Place their child on, and pick them up from, their designated yellow school bus.

If the Transportation Agreement is **not signed and returned**, the centre will not be able to provide transportation services for your child.

This process ensures that we have the necessary permissions and up-to-date information to keep all children safe while in transit.

First Day of Kindergarten

Many neighbourhood schools follow a **staggered entry schedule** for Kindergarten during the first few days of the school year.

During this period:

- Parents are responsible for **taking their child to and from school** on their first day of Kindergarten.
- Children may be dropped off at the centre **before or after their staggered entry day**.
- **Transportation via daycare van or yellow bus will begin once regular Kindergarten classes are in session. Parents will be notified of this date via newsletter.**

This policy ensures that children are supported during their transition into school while maintaining the safety and efficiency of our transportation schedule.

Kindergarten and Out of School Care Attendance

Children enrolled in **Kindergarten** or **Out of School Care (OSC)** are expected to attend school during regular school hours.

- If a child is **not attending school for any reason other than a designated school closure**, they are **not permitted to remain at the centre** during school hours.
- Parents are responsible for arranging **alternate care** for their child in these circumstances.
- For example:

- If a child is absent due to illness, they must stay home.
- If a child is subject to a **school suspension**, they may not attend the centre during the school day.

This policy ensures that our program remains in line with licensing requirements and supports children's regular school attendance.

Safety Orientation

To ensure the safety of all children transported in our **Centre Vans**, every child (both returning and new registrations) will participate in a **mandatory Safety Orientation** before their first day of transportation. This orientation helps children feel confident and prepared, while reinforcing safe travel routines.

Orientation Topics

Children will receive guidance on the following:

- **Introduction to Staff Driver** – Meeting the staff member who will be driving the Van.
- **Safe Behaviour in the Van** – Expectations for seat belt use, staying seated, and respectful behaviour while riding.
- **Designated Meeting Places** – Where to meet staff or where the Van will be parked at each school.
- **Buddy System** – Younger children will be paired with a “buddy” to help guide them safely to staff and/or the Van.
- **Emergency Procedures** – What to do if the Van does not arrive on time:
 1. Wait at the designated meeting spot until all children have arrived.
 2. Go together as a group to the school office and wait there.
 3. Staff will call the school to notify them of the late pick-up.
 4. Children will be informed of the names and vehicles of **emergency pick-up staff**.

By reviewing these procedures regularly, we help children develop safe habits and ensure that transportation remains consistent, organized, and secure.

Motor Vehicle Accidents or Break Downs during Transportation of Children

In the unlikely event that a **Centre Van is involved in an accident or breaks down** while transporting children, the following procedures will be followed to ensure the safety and well-being of all children:

1. **Check on Children** – The staff member in charge will immediately ensure that all children are safe and assess for any injuries.
2. **Notify the Director** – The Director will be contacted by cell phone as soon as it is safe to do so.

3. **Arrange Alternate Transportation** – Cabs will be called as needed to transport children to their destinations. If additional staff support is required, the Director will make arrangements to provide it.
4. **Medical Emergencies** – If an injury occurs, an ambulance will be called to transport the child to the nearest hospital.
 - A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with them until care is complete.
 - Once the hospital authorizes discharge, staff will accompany the child by cab to school or back to the centre.
 - In the event an ambulance is required, parents/guardians may be asked to share the cost of ambulance services.
5. **Parent Notification** – Parents will be informed of the incident as soon as it is safe and practical for the staff member or Director to do so.
6. **School Notification** – The child’s school will be informed of any absences or delays resulting from the incident.

These procedures are in place to ensure that children remain safe, cared for, and accounted for in any emergency situation.

Child Development & Screening

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we believe that **every child is unique** and develops at their own pace. Growth and development are not always smooth or linear; periods of seeming “standstill” often occur just before a child makes a significant developmental leap.

Parent Involvement

- Parents are encouraged to share input about their child’s growth and development.
- We use developmental tools such as the **Nipissing Checklist** in collaboration with families to set appropriate developmental goals for each child.

Staff Observations

- Educators conduct **ongoing observations** of each child.
- Documentation may be kept in each child’s file.

Screening and Referrals

- If a screening tool indicates that further testing may be helpful, parents will be informed.
- A referral may be suggested to the appropriate health care or child development professional.
- Families have the freedom to decide what next steps, if any, they wish to take.

- Educators are available to support parents in this process and can help connect families with resources when needed.

Our goal is to work in partnership with families to celebrate milestones, support challenges, and help each child reach their fullest potential.

Staff-Child Interaction & Guidance

Staff-Child Interaction

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, all staff are expected to interact with children in a manner that is **respectful, supportive, and nurturing**. Positive interactions help children build confidence, develop independence, and feel safe in their environment.

Positive Interactions

Staff are encouraged to:

- **Follow the children's lead** by allowing them to initiate activities and interactions whenever possible.
- **Invite participation** in activities while always respecting children's right to make choices.
- **Show confidence** in children's abilities by encouraging them to do as much as possible for themselves.

Supporting Independence

We help children develop independence by:

- Respecting each child's right to complete tasks on their own whenever possible.
- Setting **clear and consistent boundaries** for acceptable behaviour.
- Using **redirection** to guide children away from inappropriate behaviour, rather than focusing on discipline.
- Providing **appropriate, logical consequences** that help children accept responsibility for their actions.

Our goal is to build relationships with children based on **mutual respect, encouragement, and trust**, fostering both social and emotional growth.

Child Guidance

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, our goal is to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respectful to themselves, to others, and to property. Our guidance policy is designed to help children develop **self-control, self-esteem, and positive social skills**. We use developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention strategies to encourage positive behaviours and create healthy outcomes.

Infants (0–18 months):

Prevention and Redirection

Because infants are still developing an understanding of themselves and their environment, guidance is based on prevention, redirection, and nurturing relationships. Staff model polite and considerate behaviour and take into account each child's needs, developmental level, and family and cultural background.

Strategies include:

- Building warm, respectful relationships with each child.
- Providing sufficient toys and play materials to support individual or group play.
- Adapting the environment to meet children's developmental needs and interests.
- Allowing extended periods of child-led play to reduce frustration.
- Positioning educators at the children's level throughout the room for effective supervision.
- Redirecting children and offering choices to guide them toward appropriate behaviours.

Toddlers, Preschool, Kindergarten & Out of School Care:

Prevention

Staff set the tone by modeling polite, respectful behaviour. Each child's developmental stage, cultural background, and individual needs are considered when guiding behaviour.

Strategies include:

- Providing sufficient play materials to minimize conflict.
- Adjusting the environment to match children's interests and needs.
- Allowing extended periods of child-led play to foster focus and engagement.
- Building positive relationships and role modeling respectful interactions.
- Redirecting behaviour and offering meaningful choices.
- Communicating expectations and consequences in clear, age-appropriate language.
- Providing positive feedback and reinforcement.
- Planning programming to minimize waiting and encourage positive outcomes.
- Preparing children for transitions (e.g., giving warnings, starting small groups early).
- Engaging children in creating expectations for their room (e.g., OSC children creating their own rules).
- Ensuring educators position themselves strategically to supervise effectively.

Intervention

If preventative methods are not effective, staff may use intervention strategies suited to the child's age and needs.

Strategies include:

- Offering choices that empower the child to make positive decisions.
- Providing supervised personal time away from the group or activity.
- Talking with the child calmly about the behaviour.
- Encouraging problem-solving (with older children, where developmentally appropriate).
- Reminding children of expectations and consequences in a clear, calm manner.
- Asking for support from another educator or the Directors.
- Engaging parents and/or the Directors in discussions when needed.

Not permitted:

- Physical or verbal punishment.
- Physical degradation or emotional deprivation.
- Denial (or threat of denial) of basic necessities (e.g., food, bathroom).
- Any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.

Zero Tolerance for Violence

Continued Negative Behaviour or Violence

If negative behaviours persist or if a child exhibits severe behaviours (e.g., violence, aggression, destruction of property), additional interventions may be required.

Strategies include:

- Removing the child from the group to a quiet area to calm down, with an educator present.
- Supporting the child with calming strategies (deep breathing, quiet space, talking).
- Using physical intervention only if the child is at risk of harming themselves or others.
- Allowing the child to return to the group once calm, with supportive and sensitive transitions.
- Notifying parents/guardians of incidents.
- Informing the Directors immediately.

Our program has a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** for violent behaviour or destruction of property. Such incidents will result in immediate removal from the group, and parents/guardians will be contacted. Continued violent behaviour may result in dismissal from the program.

Termination is always a last resort but may be necessary to maintain a safe environment for all children.

When deemed necessary by the Directors, other families may be notified of violent incidents (e.g., if their child witnessed the behaviour), so that they can provide support at home.

The Family's Role in Child Guidance

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we view families as **partners** in guiding children toward positive behaviours. Open communication between educators and families is essential to supporting children's growth and ensuring consistency across home and centre environments.

Collaboration with Families

- Families are encouraged to share relevant information that may help educators better understand their child's behaviour (e.g., changes in home environment, new activities, or custody arrangements).
- Educators will share information with families about a child's behaviour—both positive and challenging—at pick-up time whenever possible.

Consistency in Strategies

- Guidance strategies used at home will only be implemented at the centre if they are consistent with our program philosophy and meet child care licensing standards.
- Our goal is to support strategies that are **developmentally appropriate, respectful, and effective** in promoting positive outcomes.

Parent Involvement in Behaviour Support

- If a child's behaviour requires more focused attention, a meeting will be arranged between educators, the Directors, and the family at a mutually convenient time.
- The purpose of this meeting will be to create a collaborative **action plan** that supports the child's needs and outlines strategies for home and centre.
- While termination of care is always a **last resort**, it may become necessary if negative behaviours persist despite consistent interventions.

Respectful Boundaries

- Parents are not permitted to speak directly to any child other than their own regarding incidents at the centre. Educators are responsible for child guidance while children are in our care.

Together, families and educators can create a supportive and consistent environment that helps each child develop self-control, confidence, and positive social skills.

Electronics and Personal Devices

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we believe children benefit most from **active play, hands-on learning, and social interaction**. For this reason, electronic devices

such as tablets, phones, and handheld games are **not provided by the centre** and are not part of our daily program.

Use of Personal Devices from Home

- Children are not permitted to have cell phones in the centre rooms, during outdoor play, or during school transportation.
- On special occasions, or during the summer months, children may be permitted to bring personal electronic devices from home to be used under the supervision of our educators.
- Daily use of these items is **not permitted**.
- Any device brought from home will be reviewed by staff to ensure it is age-appropriate and educational.
- Children will be supervised while using electronic devices. Alternative activities are always available.

Inappropriate Use

The following uses of devices are strictly prohibited:

- Taking pictures or videos of other children.
- Accessing inappropriate websites, apps, or games.
- Sending messages, using foul language, or engaging in cyberbullying.

Children who use devices inappropriately will lose the privilege of bringing them to the centre for a set period, determined by the Supervisor.

Responsibility for Personal Items

The centre is **not responsible** for personal devices or items brought from home. By enrolling your child at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, you agree to absolve the centre of any liability for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Inclusion and Diversity

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we believe every child is a unique individual with their own qualities, strengths, and skills. Our educators are committed to recognizing and celebrating this uniqueness while fostering an environment that is **respectful, inclusive, and supportive of diversity**.

Children at our centre are encouraged to **explore, experiment, and create** within a community that embraces many different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives. In the course of learning, we may discuss or read about a variety of beliefs, lifestyles, and customs, both within our community and from around the world.

All materials and discussions are presented in an **objective and age-appropriate manner**, with the goal of helping children:

- Develop a positive self-image and sense of belonging.

- Gain respect and appreciation for others.
- Build pride in themselves, their families, and their community.

We strive to ensure that every child feels **valued, respected, and celebrated** for who they are.

Holiday Celebrations

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we view holiday celebrations as a wonderful opportunity to **promote diversity, foster inclusion, and learn about different cultures and traditions**.

Some holidays may be celebrated with special snacks or crafts, while others may be honoured through meaningful activities such as **food drives, charitable collections, storytelling, or visits from special guests**.

If your family celebrates a particular holiday and would like it recognized at the centre, we invite you to speak with your child's ECE. Together, we will find an **appropriate and respectful way** to share your traditions with the children.

By celebrating a variety of holidays, we help children gain appreciation for the richness of the world around them, while also building pride in their own heritage.

Birthdays

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we understand the importance of recognizing each child's birthday. Celebrating birthdays helps children develop a sense of **self-worth, belonging, and connection** with their peers. To ensure celebrations are safe, inclusive, and consistent with our daily routine, the following guidelines apply:

Celebrating at the Centre

- Educators are aware of children's birthdays and will celebrate by singing **Happy Birthday** with the group.
- Families may request that their child **not participate** in birthday celebrations if that is their preference.
- Photos of the celebration will be taken by staff and shared with families through **Timesavr**.

Parent Contributions

Families are welcome to provide **store-bought treats** with the original ingredient list for allergy verification. Options include:

- Cake or mini cupcakes.
- Store-bought cookies, granola bars, or marshmallow squares.
- Fruit and yogurt.

Families may also choose to provide **non-food alternatives**, such as:

- Small trinkets (pencils, erasers, stickers, bubbles, colouring books).

- Goody bags with age-appropriate items.
- A book or toy donation for the classroom.
- Hosting a simple birthday activity, such as a craft or party game, led by the parent.

Safety Considerations

- **No balloons, please.** Balloons can pop unexpectedly, startling children, and latex pieces may pose a choking hazard.
- All treats and items must be **nut-free** and safe for children with allergies.

By keeping celebrations simple, safe, and inclusive, we ensure that every child's special day is recognized in a way that brings joy to the group while respecting all families.

Field Trips

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we arrange several **field trips during the summer months** to give children opportunities for **educational, social, cultural, environmental, and recreational experiences**. Destinations are selected with input from the children and may take place at various locations across the City of Edmonton.

Overview

Parent Consent and Involvement

- Parents/Guardians must sign a **permission slip** for each field trip in order for their child to attend.
- Parents are welcome to **volunteer** on field trips. Please refer to the *Volunteer Policy* section of this handbook for details.

Fees

- Field trip costs will be added to your **monthly fees** and are due at the same time as regular payments.
- Families who choose not to have their child participate must arrange **alternate care**, as the centre will not have extra educators available on field trip days.

Safety and Emergencies

- Staff ensure that appropriate supervision ratios are met both during transportation and at the field trip destination.
- Attendance is taken before departure, during the trip, and upon return to the centre.
- By signing the field trip consent form, parents/guardians authorize Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care to obtain **emergency medical attention** for their child if required. Families are responsible for any associated costs.
- If a child's behaviour jeopardizes their safety or the safety of others, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the child from the field trip location. The child may not be

permitted to attend the next scheduled trip. Any such incidents will be documented and reviewed by the Director for fairness.

- Children must be **dropped off and picked up at the centre** on field trip days. Drop-offs and pick-ups at the field trip site are not permitted.
- A first aid kit, cell phone, and children's emergency contact/medical information are carried on all field trips.
- In the event of an emergency, staff will follow established procedures, which may include calling emergency services, notifying the Director, and contacting parents/guardians.

Orientation for Children

- Before summer field trips begin, educators review **rules, expectations, and safety procedures** with all children.
- Emergency procedures and behaviour expectations are also reviewed **before every field trip** to ensure children are prepared.

Transportation to Field Trip Sites

Field trips may use either the **centre's vans** or a **chartered yellow school bus** for transportation.

- Parent Volunteers who choose to transport their own child in their **personal vehicle** or by another mode of transportation during a field trip acknowledge that the centre is **not liable** for any accidents, damage, or vandalism that may occur.
- Parent Volunteers who leave their vehicle at the centre while accompanying children on a field trip using the centre's transportation agree that the centre is **not responsible** for any damage, vandalism, or accidents involving their vehicle during that time.
- When transportation is provided by a **chartered yellow school bus**, Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care is **not responsible** for accidents, injuries, delays, or other incidents that may occur while children are being transported by the bus company. The centre's responsibility applies only to situations that arise as a direct result of staff negligence.

By participating in field trips, families and volunteers accept these transportation and liability guidelines.

Volunteering

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we welcome volunteers who are interested in contributing to our programs. Volunteers provide **extra support and enrichment** to the centre, whether during daily routines or on field trips.

Please note that **volunteers do not count as staff** for the purposes of maintaining staff-to-child ratios.

Types of Volunteers

There are two types of volunteers at our centre:

1. Centre Volunteers

- Often individuals pursuing their **child care certification**.
- May assist staff in support roles (e.g., retrieving items, helping children get dressed, tidying the room).
- May also lead activities under staff supervision (e.g., circle time, crafts, group games).
- **Restrictions:** Centre Volunteers are not permitted to take children anywhere without a qualified staff member present.
- **Requirements:** Must be **18 years or older** and provide an **original criminal record check** (obtained within the last 6 months).

2. Parent Volunteers

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to share their **time, skills, and cultural traditions** with children in the program.
- Parent Volunteers are a valued part of activities and field trips, but:
 - They are not permitted unsupervised access to children (other than their own).
 - They may not take children anywhere without a qualified staff member present.
- Criminal record checks are **not required** for Parent Volunteers, as they will not have unsupervised access to children.

Volunteer Expectations

To ensure a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all children:

- **Confidentiality:** Volunteers must respect the privacy of all families and children. Information learned at the centre must not be shared outside the program.
- **Respectful Conduct:** Volunteers are expected to model positive behaviour, use respectful language, and follow the same expectations as staff when interacting with children.
- **Supervision:** Volunteers must always remain under the direction of staff and never assume sole responsibility for children.
- **Safety First:** Volunteers should immediately report any concerns, accidents, or unsafe situations to a staff member or the Director.
- **Reliability:** Volunteers are expected to arrive on time and follow through on their commitments whenever possible.

By following these guidelines, volunteers help create a **safe, supportive, and enriching environment** for every child.

All volunteers are required to **review and sign the Volunteer Agreement** before beginning their role at the centre. By signing, volunteers confirm that they understand and agree to follow the expectations outlined above.

Community Involvement

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we value strong connections with our community and believe that these partnerships enhance the learning experiences of the children in our care.

Community Resources

Our staff are happy to assist families with any concerns or challenges, whether inside or outside the centre. If you or your child require support, please speak with a staff member or the Director.

We are able to provide referrals to a variety of resources, including:

- Speech therapists
- Occupational and physiotherapists
- Early learning programs
- Health units
- Other community-based supports

We believe in connecting families to the resources that best meet their needs and are committed to helping you access appropriate services.

Community Partnerships

We value working relationships with organizations such as the **local library, schools, and health services**. These partnerships allow us to enrich our programming and remain responsive to community needs.

- When a parent approaches us with a concern, we will suggest or research relevant resources. If appropriate, referrals or printed information will be provided.
- Staff will follow up with families to ensure resources were helpful and, if needed, explore alternative options.
- Communication with neighbourhood schools is maintained through staff visits and monthly newsletters.
- A list of children attending each school is shared at the beginning of the school year (and updated as needed) to help coordinate programming and transportation.
- Staff stay informed of special events at local schools and consider these events when planning our program activities.

Concerns from the Community

If a community member raises a concern about the centre, staff will:

1. Collect the following information: **name, phone number, date, and nature of the complaint.**

2. Forward the information to the **Director**, who is responsible for reviewing and addressing the concern.
3. The Director will take any steps necessary to resolve the matter in a timely and respectful way.

Communication

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we believe that **open communication between families and educators** is essential to creating a positive experience for every child. Parents and staff can learn from one another, and together we can ensure that children feel supported both at home and at the centre.

Communication with Families

- Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's ECEs regularly and share information about what is happening at home and at the centre.
- Families are welcome to participate in the program by **visiting or volunteering**.
- Notices and special messages are posted on the **front entrance message boards**.
- A **monthly newsletter** is distributed at the beginning of each month with important updates, announcements, and policy changes. Parents are responsible for reading newsletters and staying informed.

Director's Office Hours

- The Director and designated staff are available to meet with families as needed. Regular office hours are **Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**
- Emails and phone calls will be responded to within **24 hours whenever possible**.
- If you have a question or concern about your child's room, please first speak with your child's **ECE**. If the matter is not resolved, contact the **Director or designated staff**.

Complaints

As a parent, your concerns are very important to us. If an issue arises:

1. **Discuss the concern with your child's ECE** as soon as possible.
2. If the concern is not resolved, bring it to the **Director or designated staff**. The Director will review the matter and work with you to find a resolution.
3. Once reviewed, the Director will provide a **final decision**, either verbally or in writing, depending on the situation.
4. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may contact the **Alberta Child Care Licensing Office** at **780-427-0444**.

Confidentiality

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care respects the confidentiality of all families.

- All staff members and ECEs sign **confidentiality agreements** as a condition of employment.
- Information provided by parents/guardians is considered confidential and will not be shared 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 suspected abuse or neglect.
 5. With parental/guardian consent (via a signed **Consent to Release Information** form).

As required under Alberta legislation, information contained in a child's file will be provided to a parent/guardian upon reasonable notice. In certain circumstances, information may be **redacted** to protect confidentiality (e.g., if parents are separated and one parent requests a copy of the child's registration package, the other parent's personal information will be removed).

Emergency Evacuation

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, the safety of children and staff is our highest priority. Monthly evacuation drills are conducted to:

- Desensitize children to the sound of the fire alarm.
- Familiarize children with evacuation routines.
- Reduce panic and confusion in the event of a real emergency.

Staff receive training in evacuation procedures, alternate routes, shelter locations, and the use of fire extinguishers to ensure preparedness.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure:

1. **Alarm Sounds:** When the fire alarm sounds, a designated staff member in each room will take the **Attendance Records, Emergency Records, and Emergency Backpack** and lead children to the nearest safe exit, proceeding to the muster point.
2. **Room Sweep:** A secondary staff member will check the room and bathrooms, close the doors, and then join their group outside.
3. **Weather Considerations:** In poor weather, the secondary staff member will gather coats (if safe to do so) before joining the group outside.
4. **Director Check:** The Director or designate will check all rooms, washrooms, the office, staff bathroom, kitchen, and hallways. Doors will be closed once checked.
5. **Attendance:** Once at the muster point, staff will take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for. Children will remain with their own group.

6. **Re-entry Restrictions:** No one may re-enter the building until authorization is given by the **fire department** (in an actual emergency) or by the **Director/designate** (during a drill).
7. **Parent Awareness:** All families are informed of this evacuation policy at the time of enrolment. In the event of a real emergency, parents will be contacted from the muster point.
8. **Relocation Site:** If re-entry is not permitted, children will be relocated to:

Superstore

11835 26 Ave SW
Edmonton, AB T6W 3R3

Parents will be contacted to pick up their children at this location.

Lock Down

Certain emergencies, such as **tornado warnings, threats outside the centre, or other unsafe conditions**, may make it dangerous to evacuate. In such cases, a **lockdown** will be initiated to isolate children and staff from danger and ensure their safety.

Lockdown Steps

1. **Notification:** The Director will immediately notify staff of the need for a lockdown.
2. **Emergency Services:** The Director will call emergency services (if necessary).
3. **Children's Safety:**
 - If safe, educators will lead children into the **basement**, away from all windows.
 - If it is not safe to leave the classroom, educators will:
 - Keep all children inside,
 - Lower all window coverings, and
 - Barricade the door if necessary.
4. **Director's Check:** If safe, the Director or designate will check all rooms, washrooms, the office, staff bathroom, kitchen, and hallways. Doors will be closed once checked.
5. **Restricted Access:** No one will be permitted to enter or exit the centre until clearance is given by **police** or by the **Director/designate**.

Parent Code of Conduct

At Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care, we are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for children, families, and staff. To ensure this, all parents/guardians are expected to treat staff members, other families, and children with courtesy and respect at all times.

Expectations

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully with staff, children, and other families.
- Follow all centre policies and procedures.
- Refrain from disruptive, aggressive, or disrespectful behaviour in or around the centre.
- Address concerns through the appropriate channels (with your child's educator, Director, or Assistant Director) in a constructive manner.

Zero Tolerance for Abuse or Threatening Behaviour

Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care has a **zero tolerance policy** for any form of abuse, harassment, intimidation, or threats directed at staff, children, or other families. This includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, yelling, swearing, or derogatory language;
- Threatening behaviour, intimidation, or harassment;
- Physical aggression or attempts to harm others.

Consequences

Any parent/guardian who engages in rude, abusive, or threatening behaviour will face **immediate termination of child care services**. In such cases:

- Termination will be effective immediately, without notice.
- Any fees already paid (including deposits, monthly fees, and other payments) will be **forfeited** and will not be refunded.
- If necessary, law enforcement may be contacted to ensure the safety of staff, children, and families.

Our Commitment

We are dedicated to maintaining an environment where children feel safe and supported, staff can focus on providing quality care, and families are treated with respect. We ask for your partnership in upholding these standards so our centre remains a positive space for everyone.

Building Access & Security

Your child's safety is our highest priority at Heritage Valley Early Learning & Out of School Care. For this reason, access to the facility is strictly controlled and limited to authorized individuals.

Parent/Guardian Access

- The front entrance is equipped with a **key fob entry system**, accessible only between **6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday**.
- Each parent/guardian is required to obtain a personal key fob to access the building.
- A **non-refundable fee of \$20.00** is charged per key fob. The key will be registered under the name of the key holder.

Lost or Misplaced Keys

- If your key fob is lost or misplaced, you must notify the office immediately so that it can be **deactivated remotely**.
- A replacement key fob may be obtained at a cost of **\$20.00**.

Visitor Access

- Visitors and individuals without a registered key fob may access the facility by **ringing the front doorbell**.

Authorized Pick-Up Procedures

- Key fobs are for parent/guardian use only and must **not** be provided to unauthorized or unfamiliar individuals.
- If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up a child, staff must be informed in advance.
- That individual must ring the doorbell and provide valid **photo identification** to staff before the child will be released into their care.

Security Reminder

The integrity of our access system depends on each family's cooperation. Sharing key fobs or allowing entry to unauthorized individuals compromises the safety of all children and staff in the centre.

Handbook Review

This Parent Handbook is reviewed and updated on an **annual basis** to ensure it remains accurate, relevant, and reflective of best practices in child care. Updates may be made based on:

- Centre experiences and observations;
- Parent and staff feedback;
- Changes to licensing regulations; and
- Program planning updates.

Families will be notified of any significant revisions, and the most current version of the handbook will always be made available.