



Out of School Program Parent Handbook

Varsity Community Association
4303 Varsity Drive NW
Calgary, Alberta T3A 0Z7



WELCOME TO THE VARSITY OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAM

We would like to welcome back previous participants
as well as extending a warm welcome
to the new students and parents.

This handbook will address
the many important things you need to know
to make your Child Care experience
the best it can be.





Table of Contents

History of the Varsity Out of School Program (VOOSC) 3

Child Care Philosophy 3

Vision Statement 3

Mission Statement 4

Goals of the Organization 4

Code of Ethics 4

Guidance 5

Our Staff 5

Programming Philosophy 5

Licensing/Accreditation 5

Smoking 5

Summer/Fall Registration 6

Changing Program Components 6

Program Withdrawal/Cancellations 6

Hours of Operation – September to June (*see also Days of Closure*) 6

Days of Closure 6

Emergency Closure – Schools Closed 6

Emergency Closure – Building Hazards 6

Communication Methods 6

Sign In/Out Procedure 7

Where are your children? 7

Release of children 7

Absences 8

Late Pick up 8

Independent Departure from the Centre 8

Non-School Days (Professional Days) – Fees may apply 8

Cancellation of Non-School Days 8

Indoor Shoes 8

Lockers 8

Lost and Found 9

Donations 9

Breakfast & Lunch 9

Snacks 9

Milk Program –fees apply 9

Fees and Payments 10

Anti-Bullying Policy 11

Child Guidance Policy 11



Child Involvement Policy	12
Code of Conduct Policy	12
Cold Weather Policy	13
Communication Policy.....	13
Communication with Parents Policy.....	14
Community & School Partnership	14
Complaint Policy	15
Emergency Evacuation Policy	15
Emergency Evacuation/Fire Drill Procedure	15
Evaluation/Review Policy & Timelines.....	16
Family Involvement Policy.....	16
Food for Group Consumption Policy.....	17
Health and Safety Policy.....	17
Helmet Policy.....	18
Homework Policy	18
Incident Reporting Policy	18
Inclusion and Diversity Policy.....	18
Medication Policy	19
Non School Day Policy.....	19
Nutrition Policy.....	20
Observation Policy.....	20
Off-Site Excursion Policy	21
Open-Door Policy	21
Orientation Policy	21
Parent/Volunteer Policy	22
Play Policy	22
Potential Health Risk/Illness Policy.....	22
Professional Development Policy.....	23
Risk Play Policy	23
Social Media Policy	24
Sunscreen/Bug spray Policy	24
Supervision Policy	24
Technology Policy	25
Transition Policy.....	25
Transportation Policy.....	26
Volunteer Policy	26

History of the Varsity Out of School Program (VOOSC)

In 1984 the Out of School program was started on a three month trial basis at the request of some parents from Varsity Acres Elementary School and under the advice of City Parks and Recreation.

They started out with nine children from 3:00-5:30 p.m. The area designated to operate the program was originally used as change rooms and a concession. The skating arena outside was where children came for organized hockey and in 1985 Crowchild Twin Arenas was built. Space was now available for the Out of School program to operate.

The program expanded to offering care on Teachers Convention, professional days and also a summer program. The licensed capacity grew to 54 and has expanded to 84. In 2007 renovations allowed for Classroom Three. We have grown to be one of the largest Out of School Care Programs in the city.

Child Care Philosophy

We believe that school age child care should be designed and implemented around the premise that each child is accepted as an individual.

We provide a range of inclusive activities and opportunities for children four to 12 years. We include children with special needs and any developmental disabilities. Modifications to the activities would be encouraged to allow for total participation by all children.

The children shall be encouraged to contribute to the planning of day-to-day activities. On a daily basis they shall be encouraged to give their input as to the activities in their designated room. Our routines and activities are flexible to maximize the benefits of participation for each child: activities are presented in such a way as to invite the child into play.

We provide a safe environment that recognizes all aspects of diversity, ability, age, appearance, belief, class, culture, family composition and gender. This is accomplished by child-directed, age-appropriate activities that encourage the development of self-sufficiency, self-esteem, self-discipline and co-operation in a semi-structured environment. We offer many opportunities for arts and crafts, co-operative and interactive games, free play, imaginative play, large and small scale games, music/art programs, special events, indoor/outdoor play and much more.

Vision Statement

- To support and strengthen family life by sharing in the care and nurturing of school age children.
- To provide programs that enhance the quality of each child's life through sensitivity to individual needs with recreationally based programs.
- Our staff contributes to the delivery of quality programming and encourage opportunities for individual development.
- We strive to offer a high quality child based program through quality programming.

Mission Statement

- To create a safe environment that recognize all aspects of diversity, ability, age, appearance, belief, class, culture, family composition and gender.
- To be a child care provider that implements genuine care, respect and courtesy for children, parents and each other.
- To be premiere provider of child care, while meeting the needs of the children, parents, schools and communities we serve.
- To enhance and enrich the lives of children as they become young adults while working as a team toward common goals.
- Our focus is to provide a stimulating child care facility which promotes each child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

Goals of the Organization

- Provide a safe, stimulating environment for school-age children.
- Eliminates the possibility of children leaving from or going home to an empty house because their parents have to be at work/school.
- Offers a recreation-based program that is child-directed, age-appropriate and full of activities that encourage the development of self-sufficiency, self-esteem, self-discipline and co-operation in a semi-structured supervised environment.
- It is recognized as one of Calgary's leading programs.

Code of Ethics

Our ethical responsibility to the children in our program is to recognize the uniqueness of each child and to provide both a nurturing and welcoming environment where children can expand and develop their social, emotional, physical and cognitive competencies.

Our responsibilities to the families are to continue to build positive relationships to help facilitate the growth and development of each child. We recognize that families are the primary influence. We would like to enhance the opportunities for success for each child's development.

Our responsibility to our colleagues is to create a work place that supports a caring and co-operative environment based on core values of honesty, integrity and respect.

Our responsibility to both our community and society is to encourage and support high quality staff and the opportunities that they are providing for the children in our care. We will continue to collaborate with other agencies and advocate for the protection and welfare of our children.

Guidance

All children will be treated equally and with dignity and respect. Social and emotional growth is a very important part of our curriculum. This is achieved through positive and respectful interaction with the children and modelling appropriate behaviour.

Limits are set in each room with the input of the children to ensure that each child is physically and emotionally safe. Every effort is made by staff to prevent children from going beyond the limits. Should infractions occur, the following steps will be taken: redirection, verbal counselling, conflict resolution steps and parent and staff conferences.

Should a child be deemed unsafe to himself or others, he/she may be asked to leave the program without notice.

At no time will swearing, abusive language, bullying or physical violence be allowed by children, staff, volunteers or parents.

Our Staff

Our staff is hired based on their experience and training working with children. They are responsible to uphold our policy and procedures through on the job training, information handouts and professional development opportunities. They are required to complete the Child Development Assistant program through the government of Alberta as a minimum requirement. They also must have a police check completed with the vulnerable sector component. They are also required to complete a child care first aid course with CPR.

Programming Philosophy

Our programming reflects the goals and philosophy as well as the diverse needs, abilities, strengths and interests of the children. Children are involved in the programming which teach a value of working together as a team and listening to other people ideas. Programming is varied and stimulating to give children the opportunity to pursue new interests and to develop an awareness of new activities.

We believe that children should be able to express their own individuality, as well as acknowledge their personal cultural beliefs. Programming is implemented daily but also allows for flexibility of spontaneous teachable moments.

Licensing/Accreditation

We are a licensed and accredited program by the Government of Alberta and are regularly inspected throughout the school year.

We have regular inspections by the Calgary Health Region (Environmental Health) and The Calgary Fire Department as part of maintaining our license and reports are posted on the Parent Board.

Smoking

No staff member or any other person shall smoke at any time or place where child care is being provided.

Summer/Fall Registration

Registration dates/times will be announced on parent's board and website. Children currently in the program are eligible for early registration and dates/times will be posted on parent's board.

Changing Program Components

We require two weeks written notice of intent if you are changing components.

Program Withdrawal/Cancellations

30 days written notice must be provided to the Childcare Director before withdrawing/cancelling from the out of school program. Refunds will be at the discretion of the Childcare Director.

Hours of Operation – September to June (*see also Days of Closure*)

September to June	Monday to Friday	7:00 am - 6:00 pm
July and August	Monday to Friday	7:30 am – 5:30 pm

Days of Closure

Family Day, Easter Break, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Heritage Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day & Christmas Break. A list with closure dates will be provided in September for the school year.

Emergency Closure – Schools Closed

In the event that the public schools are closed due to emergency closure, the VOOSC program will also be closed. A message will be put on voice mail 403-247-1145 Ext 2 as soon as possible.

To determine whether or not the school is closed, without actually phoning them please:

Listen to the radio. All local stations are provided with information about school closures very early. They will relay the information on air periodically throughout the morning.

Emergency Closure – Building Hazards

Due to our licensing, we are unable to offer our child care programs if the building has no water, lights, heat or any other hazards that may affect the children. If the community centre is closed for reasons of hazards, you will be advised at the earliest possible time with details of re-opening. A notice will also be posted on the main doors.

Communication Methods

In the event of an emergency closure, you can also check the following for more information:

- Our Website: vcacalgary@.com
- Twitter @VarsityVca
- Facebook.com/VarsityVca
- Your Email

Sign In/Out Procedure

1. Please only use the Main Room Door for arriving and departing. This is for security reasons so we may see everyone that arrives and departs from our VOOSC Area. *Do not use the hall door to the office.*
2. Please bring your child into the **Main Room and sign them in/out on the tablet.** When you sign in on the tablet, **look for any notes.** Notes are from staff to communicate further information. *A note may be in paper form. Your paper notes can be picked up from the folder (filed by last name, a-z).* If you need to return a note, please use drop box (below tablet).
3. In addition to notes, please check for any current happenings on the bulletin board such as new workshops, special events, and information on days off from school.
STAY INFORMED TO AVOID CHILDREN BEING DISAPPOINTED.
4. Please allow a few extra minutes in the morning to take the time to ensure the safe arrival of your child. Always sign your child out and make sure you tell staff that are working with them and the person doing the departure attendance in the main room.
5. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their children are safely transferred over to their child care provider by signing them in/out with time and initials.

*We cannot be responsible for children that are left to come in on their own
IN THE MORNING without a parent signature.*

Where are your children?

VOOSC has Classrooms 1, 2, & 3, Main & Victory Rooms that your children may be in. *Always enter and exit through the Main room.*

The other areas would be outside or the dance studio. If they are outside we shall radio them in. The dance studio is just around the corner in the locker room area.

When you arrive feel free to go to the room your child is in. You may look on the board to see where your child is or the attendance monitor staff may assist you. Please leave the names on the white board; staff will move them.

We welcome you to come in and see what they are doing, and let them finish and clean up. Please leave enough time in your schedule to allow for this. Children need to be allowed time to make the transition.

Release of children

Children are only to be released to the adults that are listed on their enrolment form. You may call to advise us that someone else is picking up your child. Please prepare them to show their ID to us before we release your child.

If a person comes to pick up a child and there is no note in our day book and they are not listed on enrolment form we will not release them until you have been contacted and permission has been given.

Absences

If for any reason your child is not attending the program please call and let us know ahead of time 403-247-1145 Ext 2 or e-mail vcachild@telus.net. So much time is used up in a day frantically searching for children who have been picked up by a parent who forgot to call us. Take some time and let us know in advance your plans.

Late Pick up

We close at 6:00 pm. For anyone arriving after 6:00 the late fee is \$1.00 per minute/child. Please call ahead if you will be late to pick up your child.

Calling ahead alerts us to your lateness but does not eliminate you paying a late fee. *Late fees are expected in cash that evening to the staff on duty or the next day.*

Independent Departure from the Centre

If your child needs to walk to/from home alone (or with brother/sister/taxicab) we would consider your child's age/maturity and personal circumstances for this request.

If request approved, we would require you to complete a "Transportation Release" form.

Non-School Days (Professional Days) – Fees may apply & Limited Space Available

You will be required to book your child in for Professional Days. You will receive confirmation your child is registered.

If you have signed up for care and no longer need it, please let us know ASAP so it can be given to someone who may require care.

Cancellation of Non-School Days

We require two weeks' notice to cancel your child's care. If you signed up and your child does not attend you are still responsible for the fee.

Indoor Shoes

Health Regulations require that indoor shoes be worn at all times.

We have fire drills monthly of which the children must have footwear on.

Please be mindful of dirty footwear. Remove and clean if necessary to keep our floors tidy for the children.

Lockers

Each child is provided with a locker to keep their items in. At the end of the day please help and encourage your children to put their shoes in their locker to avoid having to look for them in the lost and found.

We do not permit children to have locks for their lockers and are not permitted to put stickers on their lockers.



Lost and Found

Encourage your children to keep track of their belongings. Take the time with your child to go through the lost and found each day or at least once a week, you may not even know that an item is missing. ***Please label your child's belongings.***

When the lost and found is overflowing we will contribute the unclaimed items to local charities after a certain period of time.

Donations

We welcome books, games, toys, craft supplies, paper, etc. Thank You!

Breakfast & Lunch

If breakfast is too hurried at your house you are welcome to bring it in and have your child eat here at the center.

If your child is enrolled in our lunch program they are welcome to bring food that requires to be heated. We have microwaves, a kettle and a toaster.

Please provide a freezer pack as refrigeration space is limited.

Water is provided on the tables at all times for the children to help themselves.

Please note on field trip days to always pack a non-microwaveable lunch.

Snacks

We require, that you the parent, provide your child with healthy & nutritious snacks.

AM Snacks: we encourage the children to save these for recess at school as we assume they have just eaten breakfast.

PM Snacks: as children are always hungry after school.

Nutritious Snack Ideas: as per the Canada Food Guide:

- Crackers and cheese
- Veggies and dip, celery/cheese
- Fresh fruit or dried fruit
- Nutritious home-baked cookies, breads or muffins
- Popcorn
- Fruit juices (apple, orange, etc.)

Milk Program –fees apply

If your child has Lunch care, you are welcome to join our milk program which runs September to December and January to June.



Fees and Payments

You must complete our Authorized Payment Form (APF) each school year. You will receive an email link to download the form from our website when you receive your booking confirmation enrolling your child. APF must be signed and returned to the Childcare Department within three business days of your on-line booking to confirm your registration.

You must have valid Varsity membership.

VOOSC fees are invoiced and payable the first business day of each month.

Non-School (Professional days) Care fees are invoiced from your confirmed on-line booking requests

The Milk Program will require a written request and payment is due with request form submission to the Child Care Director.

Provincial Subsidy Program. We are a licensed program. It is your responsibility to apply to the Alberta Government to see if you are eligible for subsidy. Please go to the www.gov.ab.ca website. Fees not covered by subsidy are your responsibility and will be invoiced and payable the first business day of each month.

- a) Fees may be paid by Cash, Cheque (Payable to Varsity Community Association), Debit Card, Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Receipts will be issued for cash and cheque payments.
- b) 2% interest will be charged on any balances over 30 days.
- c) The program reserves the right to no longer allow a child's participation in the program if after 30 days no attempt has been made to clear up any outstanding balance.
- d) A \$15.00 Administration Fee will be charged for each Returned cheque. If your account has had two NSF or returned items, VCA will only accept cash, money order or certified cheque for payment.
- e) A \$15.00 Administration Fee will be charged for declined Credit Card payments per month (maximum three). If declined a fourth time, VCA will only accept cash, money order or certified cheque for payment.
- f) Fees for care already paid are non-refundable.
- g) Full monthly fees are in effect with no refund for days the center is closed or if the child is absent.
- h) Basic Out of School fees are tax-deductible and GST exempt. However bank fees paid, annual community memberships, milk fees and Provincial subsidies are not tax deductible.
- i) Please note that childcare expenses are deductible only for the year (January to December) in which they are incurred and paid. You are able to access your AIMY account and will receive an email each month showing monthly fee and payment.
- j) If you require a Receipt Letter for Childcare Expenses (including prior years), a fee per child per tax year will be charged. A written request is required for the Receipt Letter.

Policy and Procedures

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Varsity Community Association believes that everyone including children, staff, parents and others have the right to a safe, caring and respectful environment. We regard bullying as unacceptable and shall not be tolerated in any form.

The purpose of this anti-bullying policy is to reduce instances of bullying and we aim to take a pro-active approach in order to accomplish this goal.

Policy Objectives:

- All participants have a full understanding of what bullying is and that we have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying behaviours
- To ensure that all incidences of bullying are addressed promptly and fairly and that appropriate support will be provided to the target, bully and bystanders.

We define bullying as intentional repeated aggressive behaviour marked by an imbalance of power with the intention of causing harm to another individual. Bullying may take different forms, including:

- Verbal: name calling, put-downs, threats, intimidation.
- Social: exclusion from peer groups, ganging- up, group teasing.
- Physical: assault.
- Cyber: using computer or other technology to harass or threaten i.e. Text-messaging.

Our anti-bullying strategies:

- Educate, provide resources about bullying to all stakeholders in order to prevent bullying.
- Actively monitoring behaviours to ensure that potential bullying situations are avoided.
- All stakeholders must encourage reporting of all incidences of bullying behaviour.
- Written and verbal communication with all parties involved in bullying situations.
- Proper documentation of all bullying situations, as per the above definition.
- When bullying incidences do occur and persist, consequences will be administered as per our child guidance policy.

Child Guidance Policy

We encourage manners, respect for each other and for personal and public property.

- The staff act as positive role models and are guided by accurate knowledge and understanding of child growth and development.
- We offer positive guidance strategies to reinforce the appropriate behaviours and to encourage co-operation.
- The staff will always respect the self-esteem of the child, who will be treated with both dignity and respect.
- We will encourage co-operation with the children in our program through trust and confidence.

Child Guidance Policy cont.

- The staff shall provide the children's basic needs for food, recognition, attention, and freedom from fear & autonomy.
- In planning our activities and schedules the differing needs of the varying ages and stages of the children in our care shall be considered.
- We shall provide an environment that is warm and welcoming for the children.
- We will always provide the opportunity for children to express their own individuality, as well as acknowledge their personal cultural beliefs.
- We shall monitor the opinions of the children and the effect on behaviour.
- Rules for the children shall be concise and positive and presented in writing as well as explained in small groups or individually as needed.

We shall not inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation. We shall not deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity or use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, or confinement or isolation. Child discipline methods utilized in the program are communicated to parents, staff and children. Any child disciplinary action taken is reasonable in the circumstances.

Child Involvement Policy

We, the staff, listen to and respect the voice and ideas of every child. We are always open to taking suggestions and feedback from the children regarding components of the program and we incorporate as many of these suggestions into our program as possible. Our strategies:

- Rules and expectations are cooperatively decided upon by staff and children, to ensure that all rules are fully understood.
- Provide freedom of choice of daily activities, including:
 1. Variety of organized crafts, as well as a creative craft area that is always available
 2. Indoor/outdoor physical activities
 3. Quiet activities room (i.e. Reading)
 4. Games, puzzles, toys, and other indoor activities

Code of Conduct Policy

- Report and act on complaints of abuse.
- Always communicate to other staff in your area.
- Follow the policies and procedures set by the VOOSC program and Varsity Community Association.
- Conduct yourselves by remembering that you are always seen as a positive role model.
- Treat everyone with respect (including children parents, staff and students).

Cold Weather Policy

Throughout the winter children are expected to dress appropriately for the weather conditions i.e. hats, mitts, jackets and boots are necessary for most winter days in Calgary.

We will consult with the weather media for the latest temperature/wind chills and monitor optional outside playtime as well as.

If the temperature is -20 including wind chill the children are not allowed outside.

No child shall be outside in very cold weather without appropriate clothing. We will have a limited supply of clothes available.

Communication Policy

We believe that communication between all stakeholders is fundamental to the VOOSC Program.

We practice respectful, professional and appropriate communication that is free and open without judgement.

We consider communication between staff to be vital to the operation of the program.

We accomplish this through:

- Director and Assistant director maintain open communication with all staff members.
- Staff communication book signed and dated when read.
- Staff mailboxes for written communication.
- Staff meetings with agenda and minutes.

Communication with parents (or legal guardians) is essential to the interests of the children.

We accomplish this through:

- Open-door policy for parent communication with staff and directors.
- Staff are approachable and available.
- Written communication through notes and reminders placed on sign-in/out book.
- Parent Communication bulletin board, containing upcoming events and reminders.
- Newsletter
- Daily verbal communication

Communication with schools:

- We are in touch with the schools on a regular basis regarding children in our program and their activities.
- We contribute to their newsletters.
- We support them in their endeavours.
- We display newsletters and upcoming events of our community schools.

Communication Policy cont.

Staff-child communication is based on a relationship of reciprocal respect. We accomplish this through:

- Having supportive staff that are engaged in the interests and activities of the children.
- Staff-child interactions are positive and staff value the opinions of the children.
- We encourage positive peer relationships and communication.
- Staff are actively engaged with children appropriately and are available at all times.
- Children are free to say what they feel without interruption.
- We aim to model positive communication strategies and conflict resolution.
- Staff seek out meaningful interactions to encourage children to express needs and desires.
- Staff listen to children.

Communication with Parents Policy

Communication with parents (or legal guardians) is essential to the interests of the children. We accomplish this through:

- Open-door policy for parent communication with staff and directors.
- Staff are approachable and available.
- Written communication through notes and reminders placed on sign-in/out book.
- Parent communication bulletin board, containing upcoming events and reminders.
- Newsletter
- Daily verbal communication.
- Family Information package

Community & School Partnership

VOOSC program operates out of the Varsity Community Centre. We work closely with our neighbourhood school to coordinate our schedules. We value the community-school relationship because it allows us to provide the best care possible for the children. We accomplish this through:

- Verbal and written communication with school staff.
- Use of school and community outdoor recreation areas.
- Schools assist with distribution of information regarding our programs.
- Enrich the school experience by promoting responsible citizenship.
- Support academic endeavours (homework, projects) and extra-curricular activities.
- Encourage community involvement.
- Obtain neighborhood school calendars.
- School contact information available for staff and parents.

- Provide Care on non-school days throughout the year.

Communication Policy cont.

- Provide space for homework.
- Verbal and written communication with school staff.
- Schools assist with distribution of information regarding our program.
- Provide information about community events (flyers and brochures).
- Provide community resource brochures.

Complaint Policy

When a parent has a complaint they may discuss the issue with the staff on hand. If the issue remains unresolved it may then be taken up with the Assistant Director. If still unresolved to parent's satisfaction the issue would then go to the Director of Child-Care.

If after this the complaint is still unresolved the issue could be brought forward to the General Manager of the Varsity Community Association.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

- Upon alarm, the children and the staff are to leave the building in an orderly fashion following the route(s) indicated.
- A designated staff member shall take the attendance records and portable emergency file.
- A designated staff member shall take attendance at the designated outside meeting place.
- Under the direction and supervision of staff the children shall proceed to the alternate emergency accommodation.
- The person in charge shall be the last person out ensuring that all the children have left the building.
- A designated staff member shall inform each parent of the emergency and the pick-up procedure that is to be followed.

Emergency Evacuation/Fire Drill Procedure

When the fire bell goes off or an evacuation is necessary, directions/responsibilities as follows:

Program Leader in each class:

- Have the children line up at the door
- Take the attendance with you
- You must lead the line to the closest fire exit
- Posted outside each room is directions where to go
- We all meet outside at the tennis courts along the fence
- Start taking attendance

Emergency Evacuation/Fire Drill Procedure cont.

Attendance Monitor:

- To do a quick sweep of all childcare rooms
- Take the Departure attendance, portable file and tablet.
- To be the last person out
- Starts final attendance

If we cannot return to the building for an extended period of time go to

Varsity Acres School: 4244 40 Street NW, Calgary

FROM THERE CALL PARENTS TO PICK UP CHILDREN

Evaluation/Review Policy & Timelines

- Staff evaluations are done yearly. Include a self-evaluation and a review of last year's evaluation.
- Review if the goals have been met and establish new goals including professional development.
- Parent, children and staff complete a survey.
- Multicultural questionnaire is given out to the families in our program yearly.
- Exit interview questionnaire is given to parents, staff and children when they leave the program.
- All surveys, exit interviews questionnaire and multicultural cultural questionnaires are reviewed by management for feasibility for implementation.

Below are suggested timelines:

- Staff evaluations in November.
- Family survey in March. Results of this survey will be in April's quarterly newsletter.
- Multicultural questionnaire handed to parents in the fall.
- Different Policies are featured in all the newsletters.

Family Involvement Policy

We at the VOOSC Care Program value family involvement. We encourage parents to take an interest in their child's daily activities and routines within our program. Parents are welcome to freely communicate with the staff about their child and the program, in accordance with our open-door policy. We recognize and respect the diversity of varying family structures, as per our inclusion and diversity policy.

We accomplish this through:

- Parent *participation* in our multi-cultural activities.

- We welcome parents *to* contribute to the program some skill they may have i.e. cooking club, teach quilling.

Family Involvement Policy cont.

- Our open-door policy
- We value the contribution of materials and equipment made by families
- Staff-family communication by providing up-to-date information about the program.
- Newsletter, parent bulletin board, verbal communication, written communication

Food for Group Consumption Policy

Food being provided by anyone for the group to share must first:

- Be approved by the Director/Assistant Director of Childcare.
- Must provide a list of ingredients for homemade food.
- If store bought, must be in the original package to refer to ingredients.
- Food must be in a sufficient quantity to be shared with all the students.
- Best before date (if item purchased) or date item was made must be known.

Health and Safety Policy

The health and safety of the children in our program is of the utmost importance and we strive to ensure that children are in a safe and healthy environment at all times.

We accomplish our goal of a safe environment by:

- Meeting all provincial licensing requirements for safety, such as regular fire inspections.
- Educating children through conversation about dangers in their daily environments and how they can be prevented.
- Daily safety checks are done inside and outside to ensure equipment, toys, others materials are safe and overall environment is in proper working order.
- Ensuring that all safety rules are being followed by positive comments i.e. walking feet.
- Daily inspections of all out of school care areas, including outside play areas.
- Enforcing the anti-bullying policy.
- Regular fire drills.

To accomplish our goal of creating a healthy environment, we:

- Ensure surfaces are sanitized daily
- Toys are cleaned and sanitized frequently
- Encourage proper hygiene, such as hand-washing, both verbally and through posters.
- Provide daily physical activity with an emphasis on outside play if possible.
- Encourage healthy choices regarding food and beverages both verbally and with posters

Helmet Policy

VOOSC requires that your child must wear a **current CSA approved helmet** while using any ice surfaces.

Please ensure your child's helmet is properly fitted and snug to prevent any shifting.

Homework Policy

We at VOOSC support children in their academics. Children are always welcome to work on their homework independently, during daily programming. We provide a quiet area with table and chairs for homework to be worked on. There are supplies available to the children to work on homework projects i.e. pencils, eraser, rulers, and lined paper. The staff will make every attempt to assist children who may need help with their homework.

Incident Reporting Policy

If an incident as listed below occurs we shall contact the local Child and Family Services Authority immediately by phone, fax or e-mail. The incident report shall be sent into office within 2 days of the incident.

- An emergency evacuation.
- Unexpected program closure.
- An intruder on the program's premise.
- A serious illness or injury to a child that requires the program to request emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight.
- The death of a child.
- An unexpected absence of a child from the program (i.e. lost child).
- A child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian.
- An allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a program staff member or volunteer.
- The commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta.
- A child left on the premises outside of the program's operating hours.

An annual report shall be submitted to the regional child care office on our anniversary date in December and shall include the preceding year. This policy will in the parent handbook of which the parent must sign that they have read and adhere to our policies.

Inclusion and Diversity Policy

At the VOOSC Program, we believe that all children have the right to be treated equally, regardless of their race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, or mental or physical ability.

This guiding principle echoes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and we are committed to providing a welcoming environment for all children and their families.

We are committed to reducing barriers for children and their families and we seek the full participation of all children in our program.

Inclusion and Diversity Policy cont.

We accomplish this through:

- Equitable admission practices. We do not discriminate during the process of admitting children into our program.
- Ensuring that staff are informed and sensitive to inclusion and diversity issues.
- Educating children about diversity and promoting positive interactions between all children.
- Using inclusive language and encouraging the use of inclusive language among the children.
- The staff will ensure that all confidential information about the children and their families is kept in the strictest confidence and not shared with other institutions, unless written parental consent is given.
- Providing programming that is flexible and suitable to the needs of the child.

Medication Policy

We may administer medication to your child only when the following is in place:

- a) We have received written consent from you the parent by the medication release form.
- b) The medication is in the original labeled container.
- c) We will administer according to the labeled directions.
- d) The medication must be given directly to staff and not stored in child's belongings. We shall ensure that all medication, except medication that may be needed in an emergency, is stored in a locked container that is inaccessible to children.

IMPORTANT: Children are not allowed to keep any medication in their backpacks/lockers awhile attending our program. All medications must be handed in to staff. The medication release form must be completed before we administer it to your child.

Non School Day Policy

Notification including a deadline date will be given out approximately three weeks before the non-school day. Bookings are processed on a first come, first served basis with priority given to:

1. Kinders
2. Before/Lunch/After care children
3. 2 component children
4. 1 component children

Nutrition Policy

VOOSC Staff promote healthy eating. We encourage children to eat food from each food group based on the Canada Food Guide.

- We encourage children to eat their main portion of the meal provided from home. We also encourage fruits and vegetables before their treats.
- We encourage and respect children to speak up when full.
- We encourage positive dialogue about food and the nutritional reasons we are fuelling our bodies.
- We provide educational information and healthy eating posters to promote awareness of good nutritional habits.
- Copies of Canada Food Guide are available to parents as a resource.
- We promote hydration by having fresh water available in water jugs on the table during lunch and snack and as required.
- We provide emergency lunch and snacks for children that have forgotten their lunch or tell us they are hungry.
- We offer the opportunity to parents to order milk for their children of whom are in the lunch program.

Observation Policy

We believe that by observing the children we can be intuitive to their needs. We believe that combined observations and having an awareness of the child's developmental milestones, that a developmentally appropriate program (DAP) can be created to meet the child's needs.

Why we observe ... Observation allow us to authentically assess children's progress, to develop and plan appropriate curriculum and play experiences, to consider and make decisions on appropriate guidance strategies, to aid us in preventing and solving problems and to reflect on our own practices.

An observation binder contains the following tools:

- Milestones for the age of the children.
- Observation sample format.
- Definitions of methods of observation:
 1. Why we observe
 2. Anecdotal
 3. Two minute running
 4. Planning observations including needs, interests and abilities

Off-Site Excursion Policy

- At the VOOSC Program, we believe that off-site excursions are of great value to the children in our program.
- We believe that relocating our program to various sites in and around the city provides the children with mentally, physically, and culturally stimulating experiences that may not be possible within our facility.
- We offer many off-site excursions during our summer programming and may offer an off-site excursion on other non-school days during the school programs.
- All off-site excursions are fully supervised and we maintain the same standards of care whether in our facility or off-site.
- We ensure that the children have adequate opportunity to interact with the staff that is responsible for their care.
- Before any child can participate in our program, parental consent is required for full participation in our programs, which includes the consent for off-site excursions.
- Parents are provided with information about where off-site excursions are through brochures, weekly newsletters and parent board posters.
- Since our summer programs are based on off-site excursions, if a parent/guardian does not wish his or her children to attend a particular off-site excursion, they must find alternate care for their child on that particular day.

Open-Door Policy

We have an open-door policy at the VOOSC program. We promote free and open communication with parents and encourage parents to come to us with any concerns and suggestions. The family members of children in our program are welcome to visit our facility during program hours. Our open door policy creates a comfortable and welcoming environment.

Orientation Policy

New children to the program can expect to receive the following:

- Child Handbook
- Child Orientation Checklist
- Will be offered an opportunity to tour the facility and ask questions/answers upon their request

New parent(s) to the program can expect the following:

- A Parent Handbook and all attachments.
- Are required to complete and sign an enrolment form for each child and return
- Must purchase a current community membership.
- Will indicate how they wish to pay their fees.
- Will be offered a tour of the facility with a question/answer period.

Parent/Volunteer Policy

We at the VOOSC program believe that volunteers are important contributors to our program. Volunteering can take many forms, including donations of supplies, equipment, and time.

If volunteers wish to volunteer within our facility, they must prearrange the details with the director or assistant director.

Parents are welcome to attend field trips. If a parent does arrange to volunteer, they are not permitted to have unsupervised access to the children, but can help the staff in numerous other capacities.

We encourage volunteers to attend off-site excursions and also welcome into the classroom.

Play Policy

- We believe in the importance of play towards a child's emotional wellbeing.
- We strive to create a foundation that promotes an environment that stimulates their natural sense of curiosity and inquiry.
- In building this foundation we strive to help children to understand their social, community and cultural world.
- We believe that play is a reflection of the child's development
- Our program encourages recreation based play through inclusion of group planned activities that promote co-operation.
- We endeavor to enhance play experiences by including our observations of the children.
- Our program utilizes both indoor and outdoor play.
- We recognize the inherent value of being outdoors during playtime.

Potential Health Risk/Illness Policy

A sick child is one who is unable to participate in the child care programs because he/she may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Fever (temperature greater than 38 degrees Celsius)
- Diarrhea, and/or
- A new and unexplained rash or cough.

A staff member may have reason to believe a child is displaying signs or symptoms of illness by taking the child's temperature under the arm with a digital thermometer and/observing the above mentioned symptoms.

The sick child will be kept as far away as possible from the other children with staff supervision.

A parent will be notified and asked to pick up their child immediately. If a parent is unable to be reached the alternate contact shall be contacted. If the child illness progresses quickly and is life threatening we shall seek medical attention immediately.

Potential Health Risk/Illness Policy cont.

The staff shall write an illness report located in the medication book. The report shall include the following information:

1. Name of child.
2. Date of illness.
3. Name of staff member who identified illness.
4. Time parent was contacted.
5. Who contacted parent.
6. Time child was removed from program.
7. Date child returned to program.

Once a child has been sent home from the child care program, they will not be allowed to return until the child has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

All parents are given an updated Parent Handbook with the illness policy and the Information for parents using regulated or approved Child Care form from the Government of Alberta. They must sign the parent signature form saying they read and adhere to the illness policy. This form becomes part of their file.

Professional Development Policy

- We endeavor to hire the most appropriate candidate for the position.
- Staff are encourage to attend professional development that will expand on their knowledge working with out of school care children. .
- We provide information for the staff on employee development opportunities to attend throughout the year and pay for certain professional development courses.

Risk Play Policy

We understand that children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children a stimulating, challenging environment for exploring and developing their abilities.

Child's interest, developmental needs and adequate effective supervision of children are all considered to determine the risk factor of children's play.

We complete a daily risk assessment by completing indoor/outdoor safety check list to ensure the children's play spaces are safe.

We observe play and anticipate what may happen next in order to provide caregivers with the opportunity to assist children and intervene in the event of potential danger.

We position our staff to allow for the supervision of the entire group of children so that they are able to help, support and encourage as needed.

We have in our outdoor procedure to be very attentive to play that could escalate and result in a possible injury. Our staff are trained to determine if the children are capable of doing the activity and if they are: age/level and appropriate.

Risk Play Policy cont.

We are attentive to identify the potential risk before it may occur and redirect or stop play if there is concern of safety issues. There is a constant flow between the child, the staff and the activity to ensure that it is meeting all needs and safety concerns.

Social Media Policy

- In conjunction with FOIP – staff do not discuss participants from our program through social media.
- Staff are not permitted to participate in any form of social media with a participant who is of age to be in our program.
- Once a child is no longer of the age to be enrolled in our program they will be invited to join the OOSC social media.

Sunscreen/Bug spray Policy

We will not provide sunscreen or bug spray for your child. If your child brings these items from home and needs help re-applying them, the staff are available to assist.

Supervision Policy

We require all our staff to participate in hands on supervising. We believe that if staff develops good working relationships with our children it enables them to be more effective in their supervisory role.

On-going safety checks of both indoor/outdoor spaces help staff to be aware of their physical environments. Staff must constantly be aware of their personal placement when supervising the children so that they may work effectively with their fellow staff in maintaining proper supervision of all the children.

The staff must assess the various supervision needs of the children based on their developmental levels as well as the activities that are being enjoyed.

We believe that preventative supervision is more beneficial to the children we care for. The relationships we develop help us to be aware of anything unusual and ensure the children are always playing in a safe manner.

Children are accounted for upon arriving in our care. They are checked in at three places during their arrival. A child that fails to arrive from school when expected is followed up with the school, the parents and finally the alternate contact.

Once a child is in our care they are monitored both in their rooms, as well as in the main area. Number counts are done by staff working directly with the child. Children are removed from the list when placed back in a parent or alternate care. Parents are aware of this policy found in our parent handbook. They are required to sign and acknowledge that they have read and understood our policy.

Technology Policy

We are a recreation based program and will limit access to technology here in our centre.

Children are encouraged to leave their personal gaming systems, cell phones, portable players at home, as there will not be a time to use them @ the center. The exception to this would occur on non-school days when a block of time would be announced and children would be welcome to enjoy their personal gaming devices at this time.

E-readers or tablets with reading function can be used for the purpose of reading and doing homework, preapproved by staff.

Portable music devices are welcome to be shared with the group (if all the lyrics are appropriate) – otherwise they must remain at home.

Cell phones may be kept in a child's locker, and if for any reason they need to contact a parent we would use the land line.

Digital cameras may be used on field trips or for specific projects – otherwise they also must remain at home.

Computers may be available for a specific activity related to a unit we are doing – this would be monitored by the staff in charge.

Occasional movie days will occur and will be rated G unless parents are notified beforehand of another rating.

Please discuss these expectations with your child as to ensure their full understanding of our technology policy.

Transition Policy

We use our transitions to:

- Provide good learning opportunities for the children
- Promote confidence, independence and inner control
- To meet individual and group needs
- To reduce and avoid waiting times
- To add variety to the curricular.

We believe that transitions should be respectful to where the children are at in their play.

- A pre warning before clean up promotes respect.
- A child may wish to save a project. It can be put aside for a predetermined time frame.
- Staff should handle themselves in a calm, quiet respectful manner.
- Staff assist where required to be helpful and encourage children.
- We encourage cleaning as they go.
- We encourage the children to respect themselves, each other and the environment.
- Good listening by the staff and child is needed to have respectful transition times.

Transportation Policy

Children will use public transportation, private charter bussing company, or commercial taxi. No child shall be driven in a staff vehicle at any time.

In case of a medical emergency pending on the severity of accident it shall be determined what method we shall use, i.e. ambulance, taxi. Parents shall be told what means of transportation will be used throughout the process.

Volunteer Policy

We at the VOOSC Care program believe that volunteers are important contributors to our program. Volunteering can take many forms, including donations of supplies, equipment, and time.

If volunteers wish to volunteer within our facility, they must prearrange the details with the director or assistant director.

If a parent does arrange to volunteer, they are not permitted to have unsupervised access to the children, but can help the staff in numerous other capacities.

We encourage volunteers to attend off-site excursions and also welcome into the classroom.

**Thank you from Varsity Out of School Program &
let's all work together to have a terrific year!**





Index

A

Absences 8
 Anti-Bullying Policy 11

B

Breakfast & Lunch 9

C

Cancellation of Non-School Days 8
 Changing Program Components 6
 Child Care Philosophy 3
 Child Guidance Policy 11
 Child Involvement Policy 12
 Code of Conduct Policy 12
 Code of Ethics 4
 Cold Weather Policy 13
 Communication Methods 6
 Communication Policy 13
 Communication with Parents Policy 14
 Community & School Partnership 14
 Complaint Policy 15

D

Days of Closure 6
 Donations 9

E

Emergency Closure – Building Hazards 6
 Emergency Closure – Schools Closed 6
 Emergency Evacuation Policy 15
 Emergency Evacuation/Fire Drill Procedure 15
 Evaluation/Review Policy & Timelines 16

F

Family Involvement Policy 16
 Fees and Payments 10
 Food for Group Consumption Policy 17

G

Goals of the Organization 4
 Guidance 5

H

Health and Safety Policy 17
 Helmet Policy 18
 History of the VOOSC Program 3
 Homework Policy 18
 Hours of Operation 6

I

Incident Reporting Policy 18
 Inclusion and Diversity Policy 18
 Independent Departure from the Centre 8
 Indoor Shoes 8

L

Late Pick up 8
 Licensing/Accreditation 5
 Lockers 8
 Lost and Found 9

M

Medication Policy 19
 Milk Program 9
 Mission Statement 4

N

Non School Day Policy 19
 Non-School Days (Professional Days) 8
 Nutrition Policy 20

O

Off-Site Excursion Policy 21
 Open Door Policy 21
 Orientation Policy 21
 Our Staff 5

P

Parent/Volunteer Policy 22
 Play Policy 22
 Potential Health Risk/Illness Policy 22
 Program Withdrawal/Cancellations 6
 Programming Philosophy 5

R

Release of children 7
 Risk Play Policy 23

S

Sign In/Out Procedure 7
 Smoking 5
 Snacks 9
 Social Media Policy 24
 Staff Observation Policy 20
 Staff Professional Development Policy 23
 Summer/Fall Registration 6
 Sunscreen/Bug spray Policy 24
 Supervision Policy 24

T

Technology Policy 25
 Transition Policy 25
 Transportation Policy 26

V

Vision Statement 3
 Volunteer Policy 26

W

Where are your children? 7