



Varsity Out of School Care Program Parent Handbook

**4303 Varsity Drive NW
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History of the Varsity Out of School Care 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 for the outdoor skating rink. The skating arena outside was where children came for organized hockey until 1985 when the 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 later has expanded to 84. In 2007 renovations allowed for Classroom Three to be added. We are fortunate to have a wonderful space that has grown to accommodate over 100 children.

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 will be encouraged to contribute to the planning of day-to-day activities. On a daily basis they will 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.

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

We are a licensed 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 parents will be notified when it is occurring.

Changing Program Components

We require 30 days 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 – 5:30 p m
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/Sign Out Procedure

You will be required to drop your child off/pick up at the main entrance. Therefore we have implemented Contactless Sign-In/Sign-Out for all children.

When you log into your Aimy account you will see a blue text box at the top of your Dashboard page. Click on [expand for more details](#) to watch a short video.

Step 1

- Scan the QR Code posted at the main entrance. Different devices will use different scanning methods. See the attached Contactless QR Code Scanning PDF for more information.
- Or you can bookmark the following URL <https://contactless.aimyone.com/?siteGuid=02AF833F-3624-4CA6-A71D-E08DD8A2D0E8> in your browser.
- Click on Open Browser where you will be redirected to the webpage where you sign-in and sign-out.

Step 2

- Click on Sign-In and a search bar will appear. Type in your name.
- Click on the contact card that appears. You will then be directed to the Passcode screen.
- This is the last 4 digits of the main account holder's mobile number.
- You will then be directed to the Sign In screen.
- Your child/children will then appear on the screen.
- Go down to the signature box and sign your name.
- Click the blue submit button. You will be redirected to a confirmation screen.
- Click on the blue confirm button.
- A Successfully Sign-In screen will appear. Show this screen to the staff when you drop off and pick up your child.



Release of children

Children are only to be released to the adults that are listed in their registration profile. You may call to advise us that someone else is picking up your child. Please prepare them to show their I.D. 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 registration profile 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 childinfo@vcacalgary.com. 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 5:30 pm. For anyone arriving after 5:30 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 or hooks 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 a local charity.

Donations

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

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:

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.)

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

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.

- 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.
- 2% interest will be charged on any balances over 30 days.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Fees for care already paid are non-refundable.
- Full monthly fees are in effect with no refund for days the center is closed or if the child is absent.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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:
 - Variety of organized crafts, as well as a creative craft area that is always available
 - Indoor/outdoor physical activities
 - Quiet activities room (i.e. Reading)

- 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.

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.
- Emails.

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.
- 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.
 - Classroom one and Victory room: Door leading to Varsity Dr. outside Victory Room

First person at the double doors open up the left side which is typically locked.

- Posted outside each room is a fire exit map.
- We all meet outside at the tennis courts along the fence.
- Start taking attendance.
- Once you have your children wait for Admin/Fire Dept. to tell you it is safe to go back in building.

Air Quality Policy

When the air Quality Health index is issued and falls between 1 and 6 it is low and moderate risk. Activities outside will be monitored. When the risk runs between 7 and 10+ it is considered high risk, activities will occur inside only.

Family Involvement Policy

We at the Varsity Out of School 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 quilting.
- 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.

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.

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:

- We have received written consent from you the parent by the medication release form.
- The medication is in the original labeled container.
- We will administer according to the labeled directions.
- 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. 2 component children
3. 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:
- Why we observe
- Anecdotal

- Two minute running
- Planning observations including needs, interests and abilities.

Off-Site Excursion Policy

- At the Varsity Out of School Care 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.
- 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 off-site excursions through weekly information sheets and parent board posters. 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.

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.
- 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.

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 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 will be contacted. If the child illness progresses quickly and is life threatening we will seek medical attention immediately.

The staff will write an illness report located in the medication book. The report will 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.

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.

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.

Technology Policy

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

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.

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 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.

Thank you from Varsity Out of School Care Program

Let's all work together to have a terrific year!