

City of Peterborough
Municipal School Age Program
Parent/Guardian Handbook
2018 - 2019

Thank you for choosing a City of Peterborough Municipal School Age Program. We are delighted to work with you as an important partner in providing a rich experience where children can play, learn, and grow together.

This parent handbook contains important information regarding our programs that we hope you will find useful as a reference related to our program policies, practices, and protocols at all sites.

Please know that should you ever have any questions regarding the contents of this parent handbook or how it relates to best practice in our programs we are always available to discuss this further with you.

Parents who have internet access may want to visit the Children’s Services web-site where there are many useful links to informative child care sites. You can find us at www.peterborough.ca/childrensservices.

Once again, welcome to our program!

We look forward to getting to know you and your child this year.

| Edmison Heights | Westmount | King George |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Site Supervisor: Susan Willemssen | Site Supervisor: Brenda McDougall | Site Supervisor: Rick Gandy |
| Phone: | Phone: | Phone: |
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Program Statement

Our Vision

All families will have access to high quality school aged child care and early learning that fosters success for every child.

Mission

The Municipal Child Care Program is committed to providing high quality early learning environments for young children. We value all children and their families. We are committed to the development of strong partnerships with deep connections that ensure a safe, nurturing, and quality program. Quality programs encourage and nurture the growth and development of each child as a unique individual. We recognize and value the abilities of children, families and educators to co-create learning environments that support a sense of well-being, belonging, engagement and expression. Our programs are responsive to each child needs and interests supporting a child is an active participant in their own learning.

Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles establish a standard of practice for our programs and help guide our professional educators in their day to day work with children and families.

- Children are provided a nurturing and intellectually stimulating indoor/outdoor environment which meets their social, emotional and developmental needs and interests.
- Our learning environment is created based on observations of children's interests and further supports the key principles described in "*How Does Learning Happen?*" which provide child-initiated, spontaneous inquiries and planned experiences in our program daily.
- We encourage ongoing communication and participation between educators, parents and community partners in making informed decisions about a child's development and well-being.
- We believe that our experienced, professional and knowledgeable Educators are our most valuable asset.
- Value the diversity of our community and believe that our programs must be offered in an inclusive and culturally-sensitive manner.

Our school age programs are conveniently located in three elementary schools in Peterborough; Edmison Heights, King George and Westmount Public Schools. We provide interesting and fun before and after school programming for children from 4 to 12 years of age. These programs operate from September to June on all regular school days. Due to the relatively short hours of the program and varied departure times of the children we do not take the children off the school property on “field trips”.

Partnerships with Families

Welcome to our Program! We look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Thank you for choosing a Municipal School Age Program where children play, learn and grow together. We are delighted to work with you to provide your child a fulfilling and enriching experience.

Our Educators work hard to establish and maintain warm, supportive and responsive relationships with each child and their family. Genuine efforts are made by each educator to understand your needs as a family, your cultural practices, preferences and the goals you have for your child. Our educators will work closely with you to support your child as they successfully transition into our program.

We encourage families to visit the program and participate in activities anytime your schedule allows. You are always welcome!

As a family in one of our programs, your voice is very important to us. The ideas and suggestions that come from our families help us to make our programs the best they can be. Every other year, we ask parents to tell us about their experiences with us. The results from the community based Parent Satisfaction Survey help guide our goals and provide families with a way to express their opinions about our programs

Should concerns do arise regarding your child or our program, please know we will make every effort to respond promptly and with understanding. We will support respectful exploration of your concern and your involvement in possible solutions/outcomes. Should you feel at any time that you have been treated improperly, we ask that you discuss the situation with person involved or the Site Supervisor so resolution can occur in a timely way. If you are not satisfied with the response of this informal process, you may choose to submit a formal written complaint to the Children’s Services Program Manager within five (5) working days of the incident.

For more information about how to complete a formal complaint, and the response timeline, please visit the Social Services website www.peterborough.ca/socialservices The process is outlined on the Customer Service page.

Program Communications

Our educators provide up-to-date information about the program and/or upcoming events through daily use of the Parent Communication boards which are located just outside your child's program space. Quarterly newsletters, special program events, and monthly parent invoices are sent out to all families electronically using email that was provided at registration. Hard copies of program information are always available upon request.

Program Development

Our play based learning spaces are integral to our view of children as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Our educators model and encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way with each other. We work to support their ability to self-regulate by responding in a warm, sensitive manner and provide cozy, calm "be-by-myself" spaces that allow children space and time to be alone if they want.

Educators create environments that foster exploration of the world through spontaneous child initiated and planned activities. We strive to provide a balance of independent and group play both indoors and outdoors, throughout the day. Educators provide opportunities for active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry. We plan with the understanding that each child's development is unique and therefore our activities and program schedule allow for individual choice and flexibility throughout the day.

Educators create play based environments that provide great opportunities for children to learn. Dramatic play, (i.e. playing house or school) encourages children to use their imagination and problem-solving skills. These skills will help them learn to read, write and communicate. Activities that encourage children to pretend by using objects in their play, (i.e. when children play "store" and use objects such as shopping lists and price tags), they learn that the letters and numbers on these objects have meaning.

The program plans that are posted in the centre offer more detail about the events and activities in your child's room. Parents can use this information to become more involved in your child's learning by sharing special books, pictures, music or customs. When you participate in the program with your child, the whole room benefits. We welcome and encourage you to offer suggestions, resources and/or your skills to enhance the program.

Our programs focus on the foundations for learning outlined in the provincial document, "How Does Learning Happen?". We believe these foundations need to be part of every day to help children learn and develop in a healthy way.

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Foundations

Belonging

| Goals for Children | Our Program will: |
|--|--|
| Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world. | Cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them. |

Well-Being

| Goals for Children | Our Program will: |
|---|---|
| Every child is developing a sense of self, health and well-being. | Nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self. |

Engagement

| Goals for Children | Our Program will: |
|---|--|
| Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses. | Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry. |

Expression

| Goals for Children | Our Program will: |
|--|---|
| Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways. | Foster communication and expression in all forms. |

Our Expert Team Who Care for Your Child

The City of Peterborough's Children's Services Program Manager oversees the Municipal Child Care Program. Each Program has a Senior Leader responsible for the daily operation of the Program and a Junior Leader (Designate) who is available when the Senior Leader is away.

Our Educators are all qualified in their field of practice. All Registered Early Childhood Educators hold a College Diploma in Early Childhood Education and are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. This College is a professional self-regulatory organization of ECE's formed to protect the public interest and focused on quality and standards in the practice of early childhood education. Our Educators take responsibility for maintaining and enhancing their professional skills and knowledge and are engaged in continuous professional learning.

Each Program has a Dietary Educator who prepares nutritious, snacks for the children. Dietary staff are trained in food safety and all kitchens are inspected regularly by the local Health Department.

Students and Volunteers in our Program

On occasion, the Municipal Child Care Programs provide field placement opportunities for high school students and volunteers.

These visitors to our program are supervised by our Educators and gain practical experience while bringing new ideas to the Program. Students and volunteers are not left alone with the children under any circumstance. Please make an effort to get to know the students when they are in your child's playroom on placement.

Guiding Children's Behaviour

We believe that children have the right to quality care which is safe and healthy and provides learning opportunities that promote their growth and development. By providing acceptance, clear guidance and genuine care, the children are supported in the process of learning how to work together to build ideas and solve problems. Appropriate guidance of the children's behaviour occurs in an environment where a trusting and caring relationship has been established between the Educator and child. Staff support a child's sense of well-being while providing opportunities for the child to learn appropriate ways to interact with others. Educators model and encourage positive interactions and incorporate feelings into conversations to support the development of the child's emotional health and self-confidence.

When problems arise the educator will assist the children to problem solve in the following manner:

- Discuss the problem with the child and encourage the child to express their ideas and feelings;
- Assist the child with problem solving and conflict resolution by supporting their conversations with peers and asking questions.
- Help the child identify possible solutions to resolve the problem
- Allow the child to make as many decisions as possible in finding a solution;
- Support and guide the child through the steps of the solution;
- In situations where conflict arises and a solution can't be agreed upon, the educator may redirect the child to another activity or quiet area with their support.

Prohibited Practices

The following practices are not allowed in any of our programs:

- Corporal Punishment of a child;
- Physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a high chair, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting him/herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the centre's emergency management policies and procedures;
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Prohibited practices and behaviour guidance are discussed at staff meetings, and consistent behaviour guidance techniques are agreed upon. All staff are monitored regularly to ensure that children are always treated respectfully in a supportive way. Any employee, student or volunteer who engages in a prohibited practice will face immediate disciplinary action.

When Your Child is Sick

Our Program recognizes it's responsibility to promote a learning environment that is safe for all. The health and well-being of all children is of paramount importance to enable them to be successful learners and to be the best that they can be.

Even with a great deal of cleaning and disinfecting, children will get sick and will need to spend time away from the Program in order to feel better. When your child is not well enough to fully take part in our Program, we ask that you keep them at home during their most contagious period.

A child who does not have the energy or desire to become involved in their usual activities at the Program is often a sign they are not well enough to be in our Program.

If your child appears to be ill while at the Program, he/she will be separated from other children and made to feel comfortable in a safe and supervised location. Parents will be notified immediately.

If your child is showing signs of illness, we ask that you call your Program to let them know that your child will not be attending that day. Once your child is feeling better, has been free of fever-reducing medication or has been on antibiotics for a minimum of 24 hours or the recommended amount of time, they may return to the Program.

Carrying Medication Between School and the Program

If your child will be carrying medication used at school in their backpacks, please inform the Program Educator as the backpack must be stored away from the reach of other children.

Nutrition & Well-Being

The Municipal School Age Program has a Dietary Educator who prepares two nutritional snacks daily according to the Canada Food Guide, the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Municipal Child Care Program nutritional guidelines and principles.

The menus are posted in each Program for a two week period and are planned to meet a child's daily food and portion requirements. Foods that offer no nutritional value will not be served to the children unless previously approved by the Supervisor. We do not serve nuts or products which may contain nuts on our menus.

Snack times provide opportunities for children to socialize while establishing good eating habits and appreciation for a variety of food. The children are encouraged to try all food that is provided however, our Educators will not force food or withhold it under any circumstances.

In an effort to promote supportive healthy eating environments for the children in our municipal child care program, we have adopted the following Healthy Eating practices.

We are committed to:

Offering a wide variety of foods and beverages from Canada's Food Guide every day - vegetables and fruit, whole grain, milk and alternatives, meat and alternatives

Making water available throughout the day - We make drinking water freely available so children can serve themselves

Supporting Healthy Eating - Educators join the children at the table for snacks and role model healthy eating

Nutrition Education - We provide training opportunities for educators on nutrition.

Special Dietary Requirements/Allergies

If your child has any special dietary requirements or allergies we ask that you identify them on your child's enrollment form so our Dietary Educators can take them into consideration when planning the menus. Our Educators will work with you to meet the special dietary needs of your child. We ask parents not to bring in food from outside the Program due to the inability of Educators to ensure the food product is free from all allergens that may be life threatening to the children attending our Programs. Special circumstances can be arranged. Talk to your Program Supervisor to discuss alternatives

Safety and Injuries

Injuries at the Program

While our Educators take every measure to ensure your child is safe while in our care, accidents do happen. Our Educators will ensure any necessary medical assistance is delivered. In the case of normal childhood accidents, the Educators will apply the required first aid. This will be noted in the School-Age Program log book and an Injury Report will also be completed and signed by the parent/guardian. Parents will receive a signed copy of all Injury Reports that involve their child. In cases where the child may require a physician's attention (e.g. Stitches to close an open wound) you will be contacted to pick-up your child to seek medical attention.

If you or your emergency contact is not able to pick up your child, or the injury is deemed an emergency, the child will be transported to the hospital.

To ensure your child's safety, only an ambulance or taxi will be used as transportation. If you are not able to be with your child, an Educator will always be with your child to supervise and comfort.

You will be informed by telephone immediately except in the event where the Children's Aid Society (CAS) has been called. In this situation, the Program Educator will follow

the direction of CAS.

Any life threatening accident or injury to a child is considered a Serious Occurrence and will be reported to the Ministry of Education and a copy will be reviewed with the parent/guardian. A Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be completed and posted to inform parents about what has occurred in that program. Universal Precautions for handling bodily fluids will be practiced at all times.

Child Abuse

Section 68(3) of the Child and Family Services Act states that:

“Despite the provisions of any other act, a person (individuals who perform professional or official duties with respect to children)... who, in the course of her or his professional duties, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be suffering from or may have suffered abuse, shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society.” (Child Protection, Children’s Aid Society)

Educators are therefore legally obligated to take a child’s allegations or signs of abuse seriously and to report any such disclosure. Once a report has been made, the Educator follows the directions of the protection agency (CAS). Individuals are not required to seek permission of their Supervisors to report.

Child abuse comes in many forms and includes physical, mental and/ or emotional, sexual and neglect. Failure to protect a child from abuse or to seek the necessary treatment for an abused child is also a form of abuse.

Protection from Liability

All persons making a report of suspected child abuse are protected against civil action, unless that person is proven to act “...maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief or suspicion...” (CFSA 72(7))

Administration

The Supervisor or Designate will complete all admissions of new children. When a space becomes available, the Supervisor will contact the next family on the wait list based on priority guidelines, offer the space and arrange for a first visit to the program. Before a child begins, all required Enrollment Forms must be completed, signed by a Parent or Guardian and returned to the Supervisor.

Getting Started

You want the best for your child and so do we! You can help us by:

- Keeping us informed about changes in your child care needs.
- Asking questions about your child's learning and care; or about any of the guidelines included in this handbook.
- Telling us how we are doing, so we can improve the services we provide.
- Letting us know when you need other resources or supports to help you with your child.

Waitlists and Priority Guidelines

Access will be based on availability of space in each Municipal Child Care Program. At no time will a fee be charged to place a child's name on our waitlists. If you wish to determine where you are on the waitlist, please call the program to inquire.

1st Priority: Children that have siblings already enrolled in the program

2nd priority: Returning families

3rd Priority: New families

Dropping Off and Picking Up

After School Arrival to the Program Meeting Place

It is the responsibility of each child to meet their educators at the "home base" site on the school property. If your child does not show up to the "home base" or designated meeting area, and educators have not been advised previously of your child's absence from the program, you will be contacted immediately. We are required to consider a child who is scheduled to attend the program but does not show up, as a missing person.

Morning arrival

If your child needs to arrive earlier or later than usual, please advise the educators in advance. All children must arrive at the program with a parent. Please **DO NOT** drop your child off in the parking lot or doorway and leave them unattended at anytime.

End of Day Program Departure

When you pick up your child, please make sure the supervising educator knows that you are leaving with your child so they can mark the attendance accordingly. Should an alternate individual need to pick up your child for you, you must advise your child's educator in advance either by email or by phone. For your child's safety, we will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on their Registration Form or without your

prior permission. When arranging for someone else to pick up your child, please provide us with the name and address of the person, as well as the time they can be expected pick up your child. Photo ID will be requested of your alternate, please ensure they have this with them when they arrive to pick up your child. Failure to produce photo ID will see your child not being released to this individual.

We will ask for identification before letting your child leave with anyone other than you. You may arrange with the Educators for your child to walk home at an appointed time. A Walk Alone Form will need to be filled out and kept in your child's file. This will be a consideration only for children 10 years of age or older.

Late Pick-Ups

The Municipal School Age Program closes promptly at 6:00 pm. All parents are required to arrive to pick up their child no later than 5:55 to allow for departure by 6:00 p.m. Parents who know they will be late due to emergencies or unforeseen circumstances and have called the program to inform them of their late arrival will not be charged a late penalty. Parents failing to depart with their children by 6:05 p.m. will be asked to sign a late book, indicating the date, the time of departure, and the amount of the fine owing. Failure to depart the program by 6:05 p.m. will incur a fine of \$25.00. Failure to depart the program by 6:15 p.m. will incur a fine of \$50.00.

Should you have any further questions regarding our late pick up fees or policy, please feel free to discuss this further with the program Site Supervisor.

Emergencies

It is very important that the educators at the program are able to contact you or your emergency contact in the case of an emergency. It is your parental responsibility to notify us immediately of any changes to your contact information, this includes emergency contacts as well. If you are not at your regular place of business or schooling on any given day, it is your responsibility to provide our program with a number where you can be reached in case of emergency.

The Municipal Child Care Programs have policies, procedures, and protocols that address emergencies for all of our sites. In the event of any emergency which requires the evacuation or lockdown of the school site, arrangements have been made to take the children to the evacuation location listed on the Fire Drill Procedure Poster located in your child's program space. Once it has been deemed safe to do so, parents and guardians will be contacted by telephone by the Site Supervisor or designate.

Financial Information

Invoicing and Fee Collection

Fees are approved by City Council each year. They are assessed on a monthly basis and billed in advance of care being received. Your contracted hours of care are those you request on your Enrollment form. These are the days you will be invoiced for regardless of whether or not your child attends. There are no reductions in fees for days your child is absent due to illness, vacation, statutory holidays or inclement weather. There are no reductions for siblings or part-days.

Prior to enrollment you will be required to sign a Parent Agreement Form which sets out the services to be received as well as the fee payment requirements.

All billing/ invoicing questions or concerns regardless of which site your child(ren) attend should be directed to the Children's Services Financial Clerk at 705 748-8830 ext. 3494.

Payments

You will receive your invoice on the 1st day of each month prior to receiving care. All fee payments are to be paid in full on or before the 5th day of each month. Payments can be made in one of the following ways:

1. Pre-Authorized Payments (PAP) through your bank account or credit card; or
3. Paying directly at the child care centre either by Debit, VISA, Master Card, cheque or cash during office hours (8:00 am - 4:00 pm)
3. Payments can be made directly through the Financial Clerk between 9:00 - 4:00

Please speak with the program supervisor if you wish to set up the PAP option. PAP's will be withdrawn from your account on the 5th day of each month or the first business day after the 5th. All pre-authorized payments from banking accounts and credit cards will be processed by our Financial Clerk.

Overdue Accounts and NSF Payments

If you are having difficulty meeting the payment deadline please contact the Children's Services Financial Clerk, in advance to arrange payment. Accounts not paid in full by the 15th of the month will be sent to City of Peterborough Internal Collections for follow-up.

If a cheque or pre-authorized payment cannot be processed due to insufficient funds the current City of Peterborough administration charge will be added to your account. If a family has more than one NSF payment in a six month period all subsequent fees must be paid with VISA, MasterCard, Debit, cash or a certified cheque.

Collection of Personal Information and Confidentiality

Information about your child and family is gathered for the sole use of the Municipal Child Care Program and follows the guidelines as set out by Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Information is kept in confidence and released only with written parental consent. As a parent or guardian, you have access to your child's file in the presence of an authorized Municipal Child Care Program representative. This file is the property of the City of Peterborough Child Care Program.

If it is necessary to provide information to an outside agency, written permission from the family must be obtained, except in the case of Children's Aid Society or where a court order has been issued.

Our educators learn about the children in the program through observations. Part of their process is to take pictures of the children while they play, to support their documentation. On occasion, these pictures are used in our program displays and for marketing our program to the public. Your permission was granted through the consent form that was signed at enrollment. You may change your consent at any time. Please talk to the supervisor to make any changes.