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WELCOME

This handbook is your guide to the services of the Acorn Early Learning Centre. We encourage parents to ask questions of the staff and Director.

These guidelines should be read and agreed to prior to enrolment.

We look forward to your partnership as we endeavour to provide the best education and care for your children through best practice.

Joanne Saunders, Executive Director

HISTORY

This centre is the result of parents of the Glebe and Educators committed to the families of the Glebe coming together as partners and working toward a single dedicated goal: To create a place where children will have access to high quality education and care in an environment that welcomes, respects and understands this community. While a location had been found, much renovation had to take place, as well as many inspections for the Day Nurseries License. In the interim, many families offered rooms in their homes to be schools, welcoming other families to bring their children where educators taught and continued their work. From February 2008 through October 2008, educators and parents worked together until the centre was finally licensed and opened. Many of the rooms in the centre have been named and/or dedicated to these families as they were the pioneers who gave the centre its first breath of life. The name “ACORN” was inspired by a friend of the Executive Director. After some investigation, we understand that when the first pioneers came to Ottawa, they cut down almost all of the oak and pine trees. Ottawa soon realized their mistake and has focused on replanting these very important trees for their strength, beauty and heritage.

Acorn Early Learning Centre realizes the importance of good strong roots for tomorrow’s future and continues to work by providing high quality programs for children while supporting partnership with parents and community.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

We believe that learning is an active process of self-construction which occurs as we; children, parents, educators and friends, go about our everyday routines and special times in the company of others.

We believe that all learning is intertwined: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, aesthetic, and creative. Schools, homes and the community are all social learning environments and need to have strong partnerships to enhance the child’s learning. We are your partners.

Our goal is to provide developmentally appropriate and experimental programs for children from 18 months to 12 years, to encourage feelings of belonging and well-being, to be engaged with their environment and with those around them, and to be able to express themselves in the ways of “The Hundred Languages of Children”.

We endeavour to achieve this by promoting the highest quality professionalism, consistency and a respectful school environment with dedicated staff that are qualified and truly caring.

The process starts with the Enrolment package which will ask you for a lot of information about your child and needs to be submitted in advance of your first day. Next is the Integration Process when your family starts their journey with us officially. We require a parent/caregiver to spend the first two half days with your child on the premises and/or in the program so that the process of developing relationships with the Educators and yourselves begins. We each, children and adults, bring our own unique personal history. We, as educators, need to listen to, in the deepest sense, to the children's and parents' personal stories (perspectives), in order to make our curriculum and everyday classroom experiences meaningful.

Our environment, inside and out, will be organized to offer rich learning opportunities connected to those experiences. Children are invited to explore, and problem solve, individually and in groups, to be involved in small and large group projects, to learn and to respect their world as well as themselves and others. We are cognizant of our responsibility to prepare children for a more formal school setting and will offer experiences that will meet that need as well.

Educators treat and listen to children as individuals: competent, resourceful, curious, imaginative, and inventive, each desiring to communicate with each other and their environment. The Educators will not only interact with the children as partners in learning, observing the progression of their learning, but they will document using photos and anecdotal of conversations and body language. This will provide the Educator with the evidence needed to continue programming using the children's ideas and thoughts. These ideas are then recorded on a Curriculum Board observable by the Parents and other partners in learning.

The Curriculum Board will give evidence of the children's interests and questions that they are wondering about. This Curriculum Board will be the basis for most of the learning in the program. At times, there may be deviations to meet the children's needs for other explorations. These will be recorded through observations. Parents can be informed through informal meetings with staff at pickup times, pictures sent to parents throughout the day and through a weekly email "Week at a Glance".

Learning panels are developed from the observations for posting in places where families can read them, ask questions and celebrate their child's learning. On a continuous basis, the Educator is developing the Child's Portfolio to give evidence of the child's learning, to create the child's social story while in attendance at Acorn ELC. Every six months approximately, the Educators assess each of the children on an individual basis through a Progress Report. The report is then presented to the family through a more formal meeting. The first report becomes the baseline of learning while all other reports are built on. This process is important to us in the assessment of our programming and environment but also can become the documentation for an early intervention program for your child, if necessary.

Health, Safety and Nutrition is the basis of the program. Our meals are made by Red Apron, a well-known food service noted for being organic and local. Our menu is posted on our website. Good nutrition leads to good health. Our environment is kept clean and inviting. Each week and whenever necessary, we make sure that our classrooms are disinfected and washed. This is one of the most important components of health along with fresh air and lots of exercise.

A fire drill shall be conducted in respect of every childcare centre at least once a month in accordance with Ontario Regulation 213/07 (Fire Code) made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

Inclusion – All Children Belong

Principles

We believe....

- An inclusive active learning environment supports all children's uniqueness, dignity, development.
- Children with special needs are first and foremost children, with the right to be included in all aspects of their community.
- Through using exemplary practices to focus on children's interests, strengths and needs, we can support all children's development.
- Partnerships between families and their support systems reflect involvement, input and ongoing collaboration from all participants.
- Diversity in all forms enriches communities to be better and more productive places to Learn, Play and Care.

We believe that all children will develop to the best of their ability if they have a positive, nurturing, secure developmental environment that promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth.

We are committed to responding to the needs of the community and children with special requirements who may physically, developmentally or socially require access to a range of services that will assist them in maximizing their learning opportunities.

The Special Needs Programs offered at Acorn Early Learning Centre give all children and their families an opportunity to participate in quality early learning and childcare. Children with special needs are able to maximize their learning opportunities through individualized programs, support and services which are supported through Children's Integrated Support Services.

We believe that it is important for Educators of young children to continue their growth and will provide and support professional development as well as encourage independent study. This will ensure that the Educator is ready for the challenges of providing the most up-to-date programming and best practice for children's optimum growth and development. Acorn is dedicated to providing some funding throughout the year for each Educator for out-of-centre study as well as one day of Acorn organized Professional Development Day per year.

We recognize the value of strong partnerships with families and the community in the education of young children and will promote opportunities for this growth. Throughout the year, Acorn will organize many events in which we require these partnerships. Ex: Fundraisers for local groups, partnerships with local Colleges for ECE students to train and practice, mentors for other childcare centres to name a few.

Finally, we embrace the important responsibility given to us by parents, to care and love their children, to provide safe and beautiful environments for the children to learn and grow and play in, and to be partners in this important time of their lives.

The Ministry of Education has developed a resource called "How Does Learning Happen?" This is a professional learning resource designed to support our program development and pedagogy in our early years setting. We rely on this resource to further our professional development and suggest that you might also access this resource for further information.

PARENT COMMITTEES

Acorn ELC salutes the first Parent Committees which included Site Location Committee, Catered Meals Program, Political Advisory Committee, as well as all homes who hosted preschool programs.

Acorn ELC will continue to need Parent Committees to be set up on an Adhoc basis. We embrace this partnership and look forward to working together to keep this centre a community-based Preschool.

STAFFING

Our staff are dedicated Early Childhood Educators that belong to the College. As part of their employment with Acorn ELC, they have agreed to continue their education in Early Childhood.

LICENSING

Acorn ELC is licensed by the Provincial Government, Ministry of Education, under the Childcare and Early Years Act.

ADMINISTRATION

Although Acorn ELC is solely administered by its Director, it seeks guidance and advice from its employees, the parents through parent committees and the community to remain a community based Preschool in every way possible. Our responsibilities include the general administration of the Preschool, working with Ministries and other government bodies, personnel management, maintaining relationships with children, families, staff, church members and community members.

The Director's focus will be the education and care of the children. We will do this by hiring qualified, caring and dedicated staff of like philosophy, maintaining enriched, developmentally appropriate environments to enhance children's learning, by providing healthy, mostly organic meals and snacks, gross outdoor motor experiences utilizing community parks and learning spaces, and by providing parent education nights open to the community.

REGISTRATION

The Acorn ELC is open year-round. When a space becomes available, or when a family gives notice of withdrawal, the centre will look to its own waiting list and to the Centralized Waiting List to find a replacement child.

CHILDREN'S GROUPINGS

The Preschool is licensed as follows:

13 Toddler children, 18 to 30 months of age

32 Preschool children, 30 to 60 months of age

33 Kindergarten children, 42 to 60 months of age

15 School Aged children, 60 months to 12 years of age

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Acorn ELC is open from 7:45 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except on specified preschool closures and Statutory Holidays.

SIGNING IN/OUT PROCEDURES

Your child will be signed in daily by the Educator who has welcomed them. They will also be signed out at the end of the day.

ALTERNATE/EMERGENCY PICKUP

As part of your registration package and in accordance with the Childcare and Early Years Act, you are required to identify two (2) emergency and pickup persons in case the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be contacted. It is important that this list is kept current. No child will be allowed to leave Acorn ELC with anyone other than their parent(s)/guardian(s) without prior consent. Anyone other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) picking up the child must be at least 16 years of age. Anyone picking up the child from Acorn ELC for the first time, with parental consent, will be asked to provide identification.

Acorn has an Emergency Measure Policy.

Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, Joanne Saunders or her designates will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children by way of email.

Where possible, Joanne Saunders or her designates, will update the child care centre's voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

Contact with parents

As soon as possible, Joanne Saunders and her designates will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given.

Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the child care centre, Joanne Saunders and her designates must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by way of email.

CENTRE CLOSURES/STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

Labour Day

Thanksgiving Day

Between Christmas and New Years – Holiday week

Family Day

Good Friday and Easter Monday

Victoria Day

Canada Day

August Civic holiday

Last 2 school days of August/September TBA – Centre closed, professional development

FEES

We have been accepted by the Canada Wide Early Learning and Childcare Program (CWELCC). This agreement establishes the path forward for providing a national system of high quality, affordable and inclusive early learning and childcare services for all families. The amended fees will reflect the reduction for the Toddler and Preschool Program and for children under 6-years-old attending for the day. Please refer to the Fee Schedule for details on payments. When your child turns 6-years-old, they will no longer qualify for the program and the fee will be as per the Fee Schedule.

It is also to be noted that this is a base fee as per the CWELCC Program. This will mean that all extra curricular activities such as field trips, etc. will have to be charged extra as a non-base fee. We will always do our best to keep this to a minimum.

As always, this is such an amazing way to support families, and we are excited to be part of it. The base fee quoted provides education and care programming for your child from 7:45 am to 5:15 pm.

Fees are to be paid on the first of the month by e-transfer or credit card. Please ensure timely monthly payments due to our reporting requirements with the city. Monthly fees are based on yearly tuition and divided equally into 12 payments. There is no fee reduction for vacation or sick days. In order to keep fees as low as possible and our budget unpadding, you are required to continue to pay regular fees to maintain your space when your child is absent.

Base Fees:

Toddler Program:	\$478.50/month (\$22/day)
Preschool Program:	\$478.50/month (\$22/day)
School-Age Program (AM <u>or</u> PM):	\$200/month (For all Ages) *PD Days <u>not</u> included
School-Age Program (AM <u>and</u> PM):	\$390/month for Children over 6-years-old *PD Days <u>not</u> included
School-Age Program (AM <u>and</u> PM):	\$260/month for Children under 6-years-old *PD Days <u>not</u> included
PD/Camp Days:	\$55/Day for children over 6-years-old, meals <u>not</u> included
PD/Camp Days:	\$22/Day for children under 6-years-old, meals <u>not</u> included

Methods of Payment:

- Email Money Transfer (EMT), sent directly to Miss Joanne at joanne.saunders@acornelc.com
- Credit Card Payments, 1.75% service charge, please complete credit card authorization form.
- Refunds and/or credits for any unforeseen reason will be at the discretion of the Director.

VACATION AND SICK DAYS

It is imperative that a parent/guardian phone the centre when a child is absent for any reason. Good communication ensures that children are where they should be and safe at all times.

We also ask that the centre is notified in writing, as soon as possible about vacation plans. This is particularly important during the summer months, so that staffing arrangements can be made.

LATE FEE POLICY

The centre is closed at 5:30pm daily. Although there is no late fee charged, reoccurring lateness, more than three times, will result in a meeting with the Director to assess and review whether the program meets your needs.

FOOD

All lunches and snacks are catered by Red Apron and are included in the monthly daycare fee. If your child has dietary restrictions including allergies which cannot be met by our caterer, you will be required to sign an “Exemption from Meal Plan” form and provide lunch and snacks for your child.

The menu for each month is posted on the parent information board and on the website. The entire centre is nut free. Please see **ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS** for more details.

We acknowledge that while Red Apron takes all possible precautions to ensure that cross contamination of food does not occur, Red Apron has nuts, peanuts, fish/shellfish and pork in its kitchens at any given time and that cross-contact with our meals may occur at any time. Parents need to be aware of the possibility, that meals provided by Red Apron may contain allergens or Apron is not responsible for providing food for children with food allergies as part of their

ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS

At the time of enrolment, you will be asked to give written details of any allergies that your child has, including all possible reactions. All allergies will be posted in all classrooms, as well as in the office. In the case of anaphylactic reactions, you will be required to provide an epi-pen to the centre, as well as a picture of your child, emergency contacts and your doctor’s contact information. This epi-pen will be carried by the staff person who is caring for your child at all times. The centre has a strict protocol as to how an emergency of this sort would be handled, which all staff will regularly review.

BIRTHDAYS

On your child’s birthday, please inform your child’s teacher whether you will be providing a “nut free” snack for their celebration. We invite you to join us for the celebration as this is such an important time in their lives.

CLOTHING

Your child will require two extra sets of clothing if he/she is a toddler, and one if older to include socks, underwear, shirt, pants, indoor shoes, hat and mittens. Please check daily so that extra clothing can be replaced as required. Please try to label all clothing with your child’s name. As well, please provide a variety of outdoor wear including hats and appropriate clothing to protect them from the sun in the summer, rain coat and boots, and outdoor shoes. Long scarves and anything worn around the neck, considered dangerous by staff, will not be permitted.

DIAPERS/WIPES

You are responsible to provide diapers and wipes for your child. Please check daily so that extra diapers/wipes can be replaced as required.

SUNSCREEN POLICY

You are responsible to provide sunscreen of your choice to the centre upon registration. You will be asked to fill in and sign a form to authorize its application on a daily basis as needed. Especially in the summer months, please put sunscreen on first thing in the morning.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

At Acorn ELC, we acknowledge the fact that children will occasionally experience difficulties in managing their behaviour. When a child is in need of behaviour guidance, staff will consider the age of the child and the nature of the incident. Every problem has a solution and an immediate response is essential. Staff will maintain open communication with all adults involved with the child at all times.

Children are problem-solvers by nature. When adult intervention is necessary, strategies must reflect a problem-solving approach whose goal is to encourage the child to think out and articulate the problem rather than solving it for him/her and imposing a solution. While problem-solving can be developed in very young children, this process must be geared to the developmental level of each child.

The Educator's role to support the problem-solving is to establish and clearly communicate limits to behaviour in order to ensure children's physical and emotional well-being.

Prohibited Practices

- (a) Corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing the child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) 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 licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) 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/her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- (f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

At times, we give back to our ECE community by offering placements to Early Childhood Education students seeking their diploma. We may also have volunteers for various reasons. They will need to submit a valid up-to-date Vulnerable Sector Check. They will not have direct unsupervised access to children at any time.

HEALTH POLICY

In order to enroll in the Acorn ELC, each child is required by the Childcare and Early Years Act and the Health Department to provide a doctor's report showing evidence of up-to-date immunization.

Vigilance about health matters is critical in a daycare centre. The health of all the children depends on the cooperation of all parents/guardians and staff based on the current health standards.

Sending a sick child to daycare jeopardizes not only that child's health, but also that of the others in the daycare. It is imperative therefore, that parents/guardians plan for alternative care for their sick child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to keep us informed and up-to-date about any concerns they may have with respect to their child's health.

The following are some important health policies that will protect the child as well as the health of other members of the daycare:

- The parent/guardian is required to phone the daycare when a child is absent due to illness.
- If staff considers a child too sick to be exposed to the other children, the parent will be informed and asked to pick up the child. This includes symptoms of a severe cold such as chronic cough.
- The parent/guardian of a child with a high fever will be asked to pick him/her up immediately.
- A child with a communicable disease will not be accepted into the centre and will not be accepted back without a doctor's note or in accordance with the Health Department guidelines.
- A child who is vomiting or has diarrhea will not be accepted into the centre for 24 hours after the illness has ceased.
- A child having been diagnosed with head lice will be immediately sent home for treatment of the condition and will be advised of our lice policy as outlined by the Health Department.

REST PERIODS

Children requiring a nap will do so between 1pm and 3pm in the designated sleep room. As per the Childcare and Early Years Act, all preschool children are required to have a rest period. Children not requiring a nap and after their one hour rest period will be a part of a "wakers" program where open-ended activities will be set up. You are asked to provide a sleep sack or to purchase one from us at cost. You will be asked to take it home and launder it once a week. We will sanitize the cots once a week.

Each child is encouraged to bring a soft, cuddly from their home. These will be sent home at the first of every month for laundering.

MUSIC

We recognize that music is an important part of a child's intellectual growth and will have a music teacher on staff to instruct a separate music program. The program will be in partnership with the children's curriculum as well as offering a variety of musical experiences.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

We are excited to be part of the Bytown Urban Gardens (BUGS) Glebe Centennial Community Garden Project. We have adopted a garden as well as a few related responsibilities. This experience will help to teach the

children about their environment, planting seeds and the care of plants, importance of water and sun, harvesting, composting and so much more. We hope that you and your family will take time to visit Acorn's Garden while visiting the park.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE POLICY

Parents must fill out a "Permission to Administer Medication" form before any medication may be given to a child. Only Acorn ELC staff may administer prescription medication to a child. Prescription medicines will be given according to the labelled instructions on the bottle brought to the learning centre. Medication that is not doctor prescribed can only be administered when accompanied by a note from the doctor.

All medicine must be in the original pharmacy bottle in order for it to be administered to children. We recommend that you ask the pharmacist to give you two bottles, one for home and one to be left at the learning centre. All medicine is kept in a locked box. Parents should inform staff whether the medication must be refrigerated or not.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

All Acorn ELC staff are qualified to administer basic first aid and CPR. When an accident or injury occurs, staff members are required to fill out an accident report documenting the details of the accident. Parents/guardians are requested to review, sign the form, and will have a copy for take-home. One will be kept in the child's file.

In an emergency, staff will follow appropriate emergency procedures as outlined in the Acorn ELC policies and procedures and the child will be taken to the hospital. The parent/guardian or their emergency contact person will be notified as soon as possible and will be asked to meet the child and staff at the hospital.

Staff are not permitted to drive children in their own vehicles. If a child must go to the hospital, either an ambulance or a taxi will be summoned.

In the event of a Serious Occurrence as identified under the Childcare and Early Years Act, it is our responsibility to be accountable to/within the Ministry, and that our service delivery is consistent with relevant legislations and/or Ministry Policy. If a Serious Occurrence occurs, it will be posted conspicuously in Acorn for a minimum of 10 business days. When the form is updated, it will remain for another 10 days. This form will be kept on premises for at least two years.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

Fire drills and/or lockdown drills are conducted on a monthly basis, as required by the Childcare and Early Years Act.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

In the case of an emergency where alternative shelter is required, Acorn ELC's first option is to go to 612 Bank Street. Staff will bring all the pertinent information with them such as emergency information; sign in sheets as well as medications and cell phones.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

At Acorn ELC, we believe that the community is also a partner in your child's education and that field trips are an important part of our program. We will take advantage of community spaces which include local parks, parking lot winter Acorn Snow Mountain during non-busy times after morning drop-off and before afternoon pickup for the older children only and two or more staff, Glebe Memorial Park, Central parks and ponds for gross motor activities and learning opportunities. No other permission will be required once the Parent Handbook Sign Off has been signed for walking trips. We have included field trip expenses as part of our budget so there are no extra cost to parents.

When trips are taken on chartered buses, please be aware that there will be no seatbelts. Your written permission will be required for your child to attend these field trips.

Parent volunteers are welcome to participate on all trips. A lottery may be necessary at times when the volunteer response exceeds the requested ratio, but we will try to accommodate everyone as we know how important it is to accompany your child during these events.

PARKING

The preschool has obtained parking spots for pickup and drop-off which are indicated by signage. These spots need to be shared with others throughout the morning and afternoon. We ask that your usage of them is kept to a minimum in the interest of all. There is parking on the street when available. Please do not leave your vehicle idling in the parking lot.

SECURITY

Your child's safety while at the centre is of utmost importance. The entrance door is secured by an electronic card system. The system is enabled at 7:45 am and will be disabled at 5:30 pm daily. In the case that you have forgotten your card, there is a doorbell. Please be patient as the staff will have to free themselves from the children in order to let you in. It is very important that these cards are not given to anyone else as your child's safety may be at risk. In the event that a card is lost, please notify the daycare as soon as possible.

PHOTOGRAPHS

During the program, photographs will be taken of your child engaged in many activities.

As part of your enrolment package, you will be asked to give permission with respect to photographs, media coverage and website usage. We ask that you read this carefully before signing it and notify us of any changes.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Parents are required to provide a minimum of one month's notice either by email or by written note when you withdraw your child from the Preschool at which time all post-dated cheques (if applicable) will be returned.

DISMISSAL POLICY

There may be circumstances when a child or family may not be suited to be in a group setting. If this is suspected, a meeting will be requested by the Acorn ELC and the parents to discuss the options available and

ways of meeting your child's needs. We will assist in every way possible to provide information, and if the situation does not rectify itself, the Preschool retains the right to give a two week notice of dismissal.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: Acorn Early Learning Centre

Date Policy and Procedures Established: August 20, 2017

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: July 6, 2022

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

Policy – General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Acorn Early Learning Centre and Joanne Saunders and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within one business day. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*. For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>