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Unity House Nursery School Inc

Parent Handbook

updated February 2024

Supervising Director: Pam Hearn-Erb RECE

Welcome to Unity House Nursery School

It is my great pleasure to welcome you and your child to our school. Thank you for the privilege of helping you care for and nurture your child and the opportunity of working with your family.

Our goal is to encourage your child to be their best self, along the way gathering the skills and desire to be a good citizen. The play-based curriculum, which is the basis of our program, gives your child an opportunity to develop and express their natural enthusiasm, eagerness to learn, and curiosity about the world. Through positive learning experiences your child can develop a positive sense of self, a love of learning, and a respectful awareness of others.

Please feel free to bring forward any suggestions and ideas you may have, as by working together we can make your child's preschool experience one they will remember fondly.

Please read this handbook carefully, and keep for future reference. Do not hesitate to talk to me if you have any questions.

With warmest regards,

Pam Hearn-Erb RECE
Director

Introduction

Unity House may represent your child's first regular experience away from home, and there is bound to be a transition period. With support from home and school, your child will quickly become comfortable and able to benefit from their time at nursery school.

All children have different personalities and react and adjust in their own way and at their own speed. We encourage you to allow time for them to adjust gradually. There is time set aside in mid August for you to accompany your child for an orientation. This is an opportunity for you and your child to spend time getting to know the school, the staff and what the daily routine looks like. We find this particularly helpful for the toddler aged group, as this is likely the first major time away from home.

Philosophy

It is our philosophy that every child is an individual in their own right and should be encouraged to develop, learn and grow in a positive environment. We believe that every child is entitled to respect and should be treated with dignity at all times. With the opportunity to develop and learn in an encouraging and supportive atmosphere, your child has the tools to develop a positive self-image, leading to a respect of self and others. Further, we believe that fostering a child's natural curiosity will help them develop a love of learning and a love of life.

Home/School Communication

With a significant number of families involved with the school, good two-way communication is essential. Regular "formal" communication will be maintained through a monthly newsletter.

We place a high value on the more "informal" communication that happens each day. Please use drop-off and pick-up time to relay information and ask questions; the teachers will also use this time to tell you about your child's day and pass along any needed information. If you would at any time like a longer sit-down talk with the teacher or director, we will be happy to arrange this.

The toddler group has a regular system of communication through a daily note sent home at the end of the day. At this age, basic daily information regarding sleep, eating and toileting may need to be dispensed. Please be in the habit of reading the note each day and also sharing any information about your child that will help us care for them.

YOUR CHILD AT UNITY HOUSE

Some objectives we have for each child:

- 1) To gain a sense of self-worth and a positive feeling of oneself.
- 2) Learning to trust and respect the teachers, other adults and the other children.
- 3) Knowing that they are trusted and treated with respect.
- 4) To develop skills consistent with their development level. This can cover a wide area, everything from learning to put on a coat to painting a masterpiece or hopping on one foot.
- 5) To foster a sense of independence by making choices and being responsible for their own actions.
- 6) Learning to co-operate with others, through knowing when and how to share, taking turns and being part of a group.
- 7) To observe and learn about their surroundings and develop a consideration of others, nature and the “world” around them.

Positive Interactions

Our goal at Unity House is for your child to develop self-discipline and learn how to self-regulate their behaviour. We reinforce appropriate behaviour by paying attention to and positively acknowledging the behaviour. We discuss (at the child's level) unacceptable behaviour with the child; and through words and example, model appropriate behaviour. Depending on the situation, we may redirect the child or have them stay close to a teacher. If a child is unable to cope, they will spend some time close to a teacher until they feel ready to rejoin the group. As much as possible, we allow the natural consequences of a child's actions to be a guiding force in their decisions.

The goal of Unity House is to provide a safe, healthy and positive environment, where children are able to learn, create positive relationships, make mistakes and have an opportunity to learn from them. As well, we want the children to be able to express themselves and have their needs acknowledged in a positive way.

Even if a child is acting in a challenging way, the interaction between the child and teacher can still be positive, providing the child with a learning experience and an opportunity to learn and practice self-regulation. We recognize that beneath every behaviour is a feeling and a need, so we work with the child to understand what those may be. If a child continues to act in a challenging way, their choice of activity may be limited until they express a willingness to engage in a productive manner and change the behaviour.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Services Offered

Unity House provides care for children aged 18 months - 5 years. We are open year round, excluding the week between Christmas and New Year's and the last two weeks of August. Lunch and two snacks are provided daily. We have three classrooms (Toddler: 18 months - 2 ½ years / Junior Preschool: 2 ½ - 3 ½ years / Senior Preschool: 3 ½ - 5 years).

Drop-off and Pick-up Times

Unity House opens at **8:00am** and closes at **5:30pm**. Of course the drop-off and pick-up times for your child will depend on your family's schedule. We are unable to accommodate an earlier drop off or later pick up time. We ask that you respect this and arrive in time at the end of the day so that our staff can close the building promptly and return home to their families. Written notice is required if someone other than the authorized person is picking up your child.

Absence

If your child will not be in attendance, please call the school before 9am with this information.

Clothing

We recommend clothing that is easily managed and washable (such as elastic waist pants for children who are toilet training). Please ensure there is a change of clothing available for your child each day. Children who are toilet training may need more than one change of clothes. Please **LABEL** all clothing including mittens, hats, footwear, jacket, splash pants etc. Also please remember that your child will be outside each day and should have clothing appropriate for the weather.

School Bags

Please bring a washable tote bag for your child. It is handy for extra clothing, seasonal clothing as well as bringing home any creative work from school.

School Holidays

Unity House will observe **all regular civic and statutory holidays**. As well, the school will be closed for a week at Christmas, and two weeks at the end of August for staff vacation. Monthly fees remain the same, even during a holiday month, as this was taken into consideration when setting the fees (see the Enrolment section for more information).

GENERAL INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Snow Day Policy

We will make every effort to open and remain open. However, the following are times when we will be closed due to weather:

- 1) If **ALL** the schools in Owen Sound are **CLOSED**, we will close.
- 2) If the weather is so unsafe that a minimum of 4 staff are unable to arrive, we will be closed.

Closures will be announced through Bayshore Broadcasting and posted on our Facebook page.

Diverse Needs

At Unity House we strive to meet the needs (emotional, developmental and physical) of all the children in our school, and to work with the family on a plan that best accomplishes this. At times that may mean working in co-operation with outside agencies, such as Community Living or a speech pathologist who can provide observation, screening and follow-up support for the family and the school. We are dedicated to giving each child the most positive preschool experience possible.

Children Not Registered (Enrolled)

No other children, other than those enrolled, are to attend Unity House Nursery School. Spaces are NOT interchangeable, either with another child or for a different day. As a nursery school, we have a fixed daily enrollment schedule and staffing and do not rotate enrolled days. Therefore your child's enrolled days are those you register for and are not interchangeable.

Readiness Year Program

This program is for children of Junior Kindergarten age who are not enrolled in a school or who attend JK on a part time basis. Parents who choose this program for their children feel their child will benefit from another year to prepare for formal education.

School Gatherings

We will attempt to come together as a group with the Unity House family as a whole each school year. It is an opportunity for you to meet your child's friends and to connect with other families in our school. These will be pot-luck style events and details will be posted in the newsletter. The school will close early, at 4:30pm on the days of these events.

Off Premises Activities

Occasionally we may take the children on a neighbourhood excursion; a trip to the library, a walk to see the signs of spring, etc. These trips will all be within walking distance and will be properly supervised at all times.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Contact Information

Please ensure that all contact information is kept up to date with the school. This includes phone numbers, changes in place of work, and people authorized to pick up your child.

Medical Forms

All registration and medical forms (including your child's immunization record and completed Public Health form) must be completed for your child and submitted prior to the first day your child attends. Your child is not considered registered until this is received. Our license to operate is contingent on ensuring that this information is on file at all times.

Prescription Medication

Only medication prescribed by a licensed health care practitioner can be administered at school. The medication must arrive in the original container clearly showing: child's name, Doctor's name, and dosage instructions. Parents must complete and sign a medication instruction form. No "over the counter" medication will be administered by school staff.

Sunscreen

We ask that parents apply sunscreen to their child before arriving at Unity House. We do not generally apply sunscreen because we have a staff member who is allergic.

Topical Creams/Lotions/Ointments

Topical creams, lotions and ointments (i.e. diaper cream, lip balm, etc.) must arrive at school in the original container and be clearly labelled with your child's name. Parents will be asked to complete and sign a form that authorizes staff to administer these topical items. These items will be stored in accordance with the instructions for storage on the label of the original container.

Allergies

Please ensure that we are aware of any food or environmental allergies that may affect your child. We will do everything possible to accommodate. In cases of severe allergies, you will be asked to help us develop a personal care plan for emergencies.

Please also see Appendix III – Anaphylactic Policy and Procedures.

Food from Home

In cases where a parent supplies snacks/meals for their child (due to food allergies or other medical conditions), written instructions must be provided by the parent. Parents must ensure that all food brought to Unity House is labelled with the child's full name and the date the food arrived, and parents are asked to advise of all ingredients. When food is provided from home for children, there will be appropriate supervision to ensure that food is not shared or exchanged with other children.

HEALTH & SAFETY (CONTINUED)

Nut Free Policy

Due to the increasing number of nut allergies, Unity House has adopted a “**NUT FREE POLICY**” to avoid any possible allergic reactions. Only food prepared on site will be served to the children. Please do not bring food treats for the children, even on special occasions.

Nutrition

Unity House will provide two snacks (mid-morning and afternoon) and a noon time meal for your child. All food preparation will take place at the school. We place a high value on “real food.” Meals are prepared usually from scratch, using whole, fresh foods, prepared with your child's nutritional needs and enjoyment of food in mind. Throughout the day there are several servings of fresh fruit and vegetables for the children to enjoy.

We will attempt to meet any dietary requirements your child may have, (i.e. vegetarian or allergy to a particular food). If for some reason we are unable to accommodate this requirement, or if your child requires specialized food, we may ask that you bring food from home. If your child has special dietary needs, please ensure we have written information and instructions regarding the plan to be followed.

Emergencies

In case of an accident or medical emergency, your child will be taken to the hospital emergency department and you will be contacted immediately. A staff member will accompany and stay with your child until a parent or guardian arrives. Please ensure we have all relevant medical information on file, in case of an emergency situation. All staff at Unity House have First Aid and CPR training.

In the event that there is a crisis or weather related disaster, there is an Emergency Management Plan in place. If evacuation of the building is required, our emergency site is the North Heritage Animal Hospital at the corner of 3rd Ave W and 10th St W.

Fire Drill and Fire Evacuation Plan

In consultation with the local Fire Prevention Officer, a fire evacuation plan has been formalized for Unity House. The plan is posted at each exit of the school, and familiar to each staff member. The plan will be practiced as a drill with the entire school during the last week of each month.

Serious Occurrence

If there is any incident deemed a “serious occurrence,” it will be immediately reported to the Ministry of Education and proper procedure will be followed. A summary of the incident will be posted on the parent information board.

BITING POLICY

We understand that biting, unfortunately, can occur in a preschool setting. Although causes can vary, often children without fully developed verbal skills may bite other children to express themselves. We take this very seriously and have established this policy to reduce biting incidents.

When biting occurs, staff will follow the protocol below with the goal of keeping children safe and helping a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behaviour:

1. The teacher will comfort the child that was bitten and treat the injury as needed (applying ice, cleaning the area with soap /water, and covering with a bandage, if needed).
2. The teacher will alert the supervisor, complete Incident Reports, and notify the parents of the children involved. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.
3. For the child who bit, the teacher will firmly tell the child, we do not bite, and then will accompany the child to check in with the child who was hurt. The child will be shadowed to help prevent more biting incidents. Strategies may be used in the classroom to avoid another incident, such as: separating children, revising seating/play areas, changing activity times, etc.

Moving forward:

If biting continues, the Director will meet with the parents to discuss a plan to stop the biting behaviour. This may include discussing possible reasons for the biting as well as strategies for addressing the biting behaviour both at home and school. All information will be documented in the child's file.

There might be a time when the frequency or severity of the biting is such that we will ask you to remove your child from Unity House for the day.

Our goal is always to work with families to find an appropriate solution that allows all of the children and staff to feel safe and comfortable at all times.

ILLNESS POLICY

Knowing when to keep your child home can be difficult at times. When your child has any symptoms of illness, please consider whether your child is well enough to participate in regular daily activities, including outdoor play.

The following symptoms require your child to remain home:

- FEVER - As fever can be a sign that the body is fighting off an infection, children should remain home if they have a temperature of 37.8°C (100°F) or higher. Children must be free of fever for 24 hours (without the help of fever-reducing medication) before returning to school.
- VOMITING/DIARRHEA - If a child has an episode of vomiting or diarrhea, they are required to be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- STREP THROAT - If a child has been diagnosed with strep throat or another contagious infection that requires antibiotic, the child must complete a 24 hour cycle of medication before returning to school and only return when they feel better.

Before returning to Unity House after an illness, please assess how your child is feeling and whether they are well enough to participate in regular, daily activities, including outdoor play.

There is often a “grey-area” that surfaces when a child is feeling less than their best. Here are some things to consider in these circumstances:

- RUNNY NOSE - A runny nose can be a sign of something contagious or a symptom of a seasonal allergy. It can be difficult to distinguish between the two.

Ask yourself the following questions when your child has a runny nose:

- Is there anything unusual about the runny nose? Colour? Intensity?
 - Is the child lethargic or irritable?
 - Can the child keep up with the daily activities of the program?
 - Do the child’s symptoms pose a risk to the other children in the program?
- COUGH - There are several different types of coughs. Some signal there is something more severe going on while others are a symptom of the common cold or allergies. It is difficult to know the difference, and when a child does not know how to cover their cough sufficiently, it will lead to a spread of the illness.

ILLNESS POLICY (CONTINUED)

Consider the following when your child has a cough:

- Does your child need to see a doctor to rule out anything serious?
- Is the child miserable, irritable or lethargic?
- Is he/she able to participate in the program's daily activities?
- Can the child cover his/her cough consistently?
- Consider the well-being of the other children in the program. Is this cough putting other children at risk?

If your child becomes ill at school you will be called and asked to make arrangements to pick up your child. Please have alternate sick care arrangements in place and ensure the name and contact information for the alternate caregiver is on file. Also be sure to keep your contact information updated with the school, so that you can be reached if needed.

In the event of a severe community health outbreak, stricter measures may be in place. We will follow guidance from the Public Health Unit and will readily communicate this to parents. *Please also see Appendix II - Severe Public Health Outbreak Policy.*

ENROLLMENT / REGISTRATION

License

Unity House Nursery School is licensed for a maximum of 26 children.
(10 toddlers, 8 junior preschoolers, 8 senior preschoolers/JK aged children)

Unity House is licensed and inspected regularly by the Program Advisor appointed by the Ministry of Education as well as a Public Health Inspector from the local Public Health Department. Information regarding our license and the licensing procedure is available from the Ministry of Education website. In addition, our license is posted near the front door of the school.

Tuition Fees

Please refer to the fee schedule included in the registration package for enrollment costs. Fees are paid as a monthly amount. As noted in the schedule, the fees are due on the 1st of each month and remain the same regardless of sick days or holidays. This ensures the fees are the same each month and covers the holidays that happen throughout the year. There are no refunds or reductions for sick days, missed days, holidays or snow days.

Please be sure to include the registration fee when returning your registration package and ensure that post-dated cheques are included with your completed registration package or that an automatic e-transfer payment is set up to be sent on the first of the month.

Late Fee Policy: There will be a \$25 per day fee for each day your payment is late.

There will be a \$50.00 administration fee for any dishonoured cheques.

By the end of February each year, a receipt for the previous year's fees will be issued for tax purposes.

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System

As of October 1, 2022, Unity House is enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC) that is offered through the Province of Ontario.

Enrollment in this program allows Unity House to offer reduced fees to families. An initial fee reduction was implemented on October 1, 2022 with an additional reduction in January 2023, resulting in a more than 50% reduction to fees. A final fee reduction will take place in 2025.

Unity House will review participation in this program annually. If we decide to make any changes, will give families 60 days notice.

ENROLLMENT / REGISTRATION (CONTINUED)

Admission and Discharge

In early spring of each year, there will be registration for the following September. Current families will have a chance to register prior to those on the waiting list. If space allows, children can also be accepted over the course of the year.

To complete your child's registration, parents are asked to:

- Complete the registration form
- Review and sign the fee schedule
- Pay the registration fee
- Provide post-dated cheques or set up automatic e-transfers for the monthly fees
- Provide two (2) copies of your child's immunization record
- Complete and sign the Public Health form
- Complete and sign the CWELCC enrollment form

A child is not considered registered (a space is not reserved) until all documentation from the registration package is complete and required fees are submitted to the school.

Enrolled days are not transferable to another child, nor are they interchangeable with other days of the week. Unity House is unable to accommodate rotating schedules.

If for any reason a child's enrollment is ended by a parent, one month's written notice is required. Any remaining post-dated cheques on file will be returned at the end of this time.

Waitlist Policy

First priority on the waiting list will be given to current and former Unity House families. After that, new families are placed on the waiting list in numerical order according to date of 1st contact, regardless of contact method, (email, phone inquiry, in person). Addition of a name to the waiting list does not guarantee enrollment at the desired date.

The Director will use discretion when filling spaces – prioritizing the current needs of the school, (i.e. a full time child may be placed before a part time child if a full time space becomes available).

When availability occurs, current families expressing interest in more or different days, will be offered available spaces first. Then, families from the waitlist will be contacted based on the numerical order. A maximum of two attempts will be made to contact the family, and if no response, the name will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Waitlist Policy (Continued)

During registration, the order in which the spaces are filled is as follows:

- 1) Current children returning for the following year, or siblings of current children just beginning at Unity House
- 2) Former families of Unity House returning with a different child
- 3) Families already on wait list (who will be contacted regarding registration)
- 4) Any remaining spaces filled as able

Please note that if all registration paperwork is not submitted by the deadline, the place in registration order will drop.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Student and Volunteer Policy:

There may be times when Unity House will be hosting a placement student from a local high school or ECE program, or a local citizen will volunteer at the school. All ECE students and volunteers will be required to supply a current Criminal Reference Check with a Vulnerable Sector Screen; this does not apply to students under 18 years of age.

Students and volunteers are in addition to regular staff and not included in the teacher-child ratios. Each volunteer will be aware of all school policies and procedures and will be expected to follow all guidelines. Students and volunteers come to the school as a way to obtain valuable experience and to learn what to expect in the day to day nature of the child care field. As they are learning themselves, they are never solely responsible for the care of the children, are never on their own with the children and are not asked to assist the children with toileting needs.

The supervising teacher and Director will ensure the student/volunteer has all the guidance and information needed to make their time a valuable learning experience for them and a positive experience for the school in general. If a serious contravention of the stated policies or procedures occurs, the student/volunteer will forfeit their time at Unity House.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy *(see APPENDIX for complete policy)*

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

Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's teacher or the Director about any issues or concerns. Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing.

An initial response to any concern brought forward should be expected within 24 hours. If the response is not satisfactory, a meeting can be arranged with the parent and the Director to further discuss the concern.

Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. 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.

If there is still a concern when this process has come to an end, the Ministry of Education Program Advisor can be contacted by the parent or the Director.

Program Advisor: Bobbie-Jo Gramigna 226-974-1847 / bobbie-jo.gramigna@ontario.ca

POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Social Media Policy:

We have a website, www.unityhouse.ca, which contains general information about our school and program. It is a good tool for somebody just starting their search for a nursery school. There are no pictures of the children enrolled at the school on the website. We also have a Facebook page, where we post pictures of activities the children are doing, showing some of their interests and things that happen during a day. These pictures do not show the children's faces and the children are never identified.

Unacceptable Practices

The following is a list of **unacceptable practices** that are under no circumstances permitted. Contravention of this can lead to consequences as set out in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

1. Corporal punishment of a child. Or the purposely ignoring of corporal punishment of one child to another.
2. Physical restraint of a 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 a child from hurting themselves or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
3. Locking the exits of the child care centre premises for the purpose of confining a child, or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the emergency management policies and procedure.
4. Use of harsh or degrading measures, 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. This includes tone of voice meant to intimidate.
5. Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
6. Inflicting any bodily harm on children, including making children eat or drink against their will.
7. Unity House does not subscribe to the notion of “time-out” and a child cannot be separated from the other children in a negative way as a means of punishment.

Unity House Nursery School Inc.

Program Statement

The following program statement sets out how the philosophy of this school, as developed by the Director, and the How Does Learning Happen? protocol (HDLH?), set out by the Ministry of Education, combine to form a program that supports and encourages children learning and growing in a positive atmosphere. This statement is available to parents in combination with our Parent Handbook and is also posted on our website. Through training, discussion and observation, the Director ensures that the program statement and philosophy are implemented in all aspects of our program.

Our goal at Unity House Nursery School is to give children the encouragement and support needed to be their best self. Through positive learning experiences, children are encouraged to develop a positive sense of self, a love of learning and a respectful awareness of others. As stated in the HDLH? protocol “Early years programs play an important role in supporting children's learning, development, health and well-being.” We believe that children have a natural enthusiasm and curiosity and we strive to encourage this in each child. Given opportunities to explore, play and inquire, children succeed in building positive relationships with others and the world around them, and in developing a sense of how they can contribute.

To further this positive sense of self, Unity House also focuses on positive teacher/child interactions. This means that the children are treated in a positive, caring way; giving them a chance to learn, make mistakes, have the opportunity to correct and learn from mistakes and practice self-regulation.

It is our philosophy that each child is an individual in his or her own right; an individual who is competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. Each child and their individual uniqueness is entitled to respect and dignity at all times.

With the opportunity to develop and learn in an encouraging, supportive atmosphere that holds relationships among children, families, educators, and their environment in high regard, children have a chance to develop a positive self-image. This enables children to have respect for themselves and others and leads to the development of good citizens.

The “Positive Interactions Approach,” as opposed to the outdated notion of “behaviour management,” allows children the time and opportunity to review their actions and interactions with others. Encouragement and support from teachers can help the children learn appropriate behaviour. Even if a child is acting in a negative way, the interaction between the teacher and child can still be a positive learning experience.

“Through play and inquiry, young children practise ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives.” This direct quote from HDLH? summarizes the basis for the program at Unity House. Our school program is a play based learning environment, based on the belief that the building blocks of life are learned through positive play experiences. As children play, their social skills, self-help skills, as well as their cognitive and language skills are developed. When play using a variety of open ended materials and meaningful participation is encouraged, children have a chance to develop their innate curiosity and hone “academic” skills such as numeracy and literacy. With encouragement, the right materials, and an atmosphere that sees curiosity and exploration as a positive asset, children at play are able to use their natural curiosity and eagerness to learn and develop life long skills.

Built into our program are opportunities for indoor and outdoor play; ranging from activities that develop small motor coordination (i.e table toys), to large motor control (i.e.soccer), and many activities in between. There is time for both active and quiet pursuits throughout the day, as well as a built in rest period; this may be a nap or a 20 minute rest on a cot, depending on the age of the child.

Success throughout school and beyond is built on a solid foundation of problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, imagination, initiative and citizenship. All of these critical capacities can be attained and developed with the opportunity to explore and play in a positive, warm and encouraging atmosphere.

“Every child deserves to have someone's eyes light up when they enter a room.” This quote speaks directly to the idea that each child should have a sense of belonging and a feeling of connectedness in their world. Through positive and genuinely warm relationships with the children in our school, we can and should let each child know that he/she is valued for who they are.

At Unity House we understand that we are working with families, as experts on their own children, and that the children are capable and competent in their own right. Knowing this, we strive to provide the best experiences and outcomes for children, to allow them to have a secure footing on the four *Foundations for Learning* as noted in HDLH?. Those foundations are: belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

Each child at Unity House is individually welcomed each day and through caring conversation and interaction with the teacher, they are able to feel they are an important member of our school community and that their well-being is important. This sense of belonging gives children the freedom and confidence to express themselves both verbally and physically and become truly engaged with their surroundings.

Of course, the first aspect of a quality childcare program is ensuring the health and safety of the children. Our school is arranged with the safety of the children as the first priority, with established procedures regarding cleaning, equipment use and arrangement, playground safety, fire drill practice and even teaching the children the rules about opening doors and gates and the procedure for using stairs in a safe manner.

We recognize that as well as safety, there are other aspects of good health, including good nutrition, fresh air and a balance of rest and exercise. At Unity House, outdoor time is highly valued and the children have opportunity for many pursuits; everything from sand box play to a rousing game of “What Time is it Mr. Wolf.”

Feeding the children good, healthy food and a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables is very important to the Director of Unity House. Our food is prepared in a “home cooked” way, served with the feeling that good healthy food is an integral part of raising healthy, happy children.

In summary, each child in our program should feel: connected to the other children and the teachers, that their sense of self is encouraged, and their health (physical, emotional and mental) is being nurtured. They should also be able to engage with and explore their surroundings and able to express themselves and their feelings, while knowing they are a valuable and accepted member of our school.

At the end of each day at Unity House, we want each child to feel good about who they are and where they spent their day.

Revised April 2016
Pamela Hearn-Erb
Director

Daily Timetable

Toddler Room

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 8:00 – 8:45 | Welcome, free play information sharing with parents, |
| 8:45- 9:15 | Creative and fine motor opportunities, (paint, art activities, water play etc.), as well as free play opportunities |
| 9:15 - 9:45 | Tidy up, washroom, snack time |
| 9:45 – 10:00 | Prepare for outside |
| 10:00 – 11:00 | Outside time |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | Wash up, story/song circle, Diaper changes |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | Lunch time |
| 12:00 – 2:00 | Nap time (restful activities for those who do not sleep as long) |
| 2:00 – 2:30 | Snack |
| 2:30 – 3:30 | Toilet/diaper changes, free play |
| 3:30 – 5:00 | Outside time (longer in warm weather) |
| 5:00 – 5:30 | Table activities, prepare for home |

revised 10/2022

Daily Timetable

Junior Preschool Room

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:00 – 8:30 | Welcome and table activities. |
| 8:30 – 9:30 | Creative activities, paint, play dough art material etc. Free choice of shelf toys. |
| 9:30 – 9:45 | Tidy up, washroom, |
| 9:45 – 10:15 | Snack, dress for outside |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | Outside Time |
| 11:15 – 11:45 | Circle time, calendar, songs, stories etc. |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Wash up, prepare for lunch, individual/group reading |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch Time |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Rest Time (some children will sleep, others will just rest) |
| 2:00 – 2:30 | Choice of individual quiet activities |
| 2:30 – 3:15 | Shelf toys, group activities, washroom |
| 3:15 – 3:30 | Snack time |
| 3:30 – 5:00 | Outside time (longer in warm weather) |
| 5:00 – 5:30 | Table activities, washroom, prepare for home |

Daily Timetable

Senior Preschool and JK Room

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:00 – 8:30 | Welcome, table toys |
| 8:30 – 9:00 | Shelf toys, free play |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | Creative activities, free choice of shelf toys calendar circle |
| 10:00 – 10:20 | Washroom and snack |
| 10:20 – 10:30 | Prepare for outside |
| 10:30 – 11:30 | Outside Time |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | Wash up for lunch Group reading/song circle or individual reading |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Quiet Time (rest, quiet activities, books, puzzles, etc.) |
| 2:00 – 2:30 | Shelf toys, washroom |
| 2:30 – 2:45 | Story/song/dancing circle |
| 2:45 – 3:15 | Snack. Prepare for outside |
| 3:15 – 5:00 | Outside time (longer in warm weather) |
| 5:00 – 5:30 | Table toys, washroom, prepare for home |

APPENDIX I

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: **Unity House Nursery School**

Date Policy and Procedures Established: August 31, 2017

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: October 10, 2018

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).

Operator: Pam Hearn Erb , Designated Supervisor Carmena Alexander, Stephanie Sas when others unavailable

Policy

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our school 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, teachers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our teachers 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 the Director 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, teacher 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/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedures

| Nature of Issue or Concern | Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern: | Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern: |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Program Room-Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p> | <p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom staff directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised, either in person or by phone if concerned person has already left the building. Being sure that operator/director is aware of concern. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within one business day. <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> |
| <p>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p> | <p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral. |
| <p>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</p> | <p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p> | <p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within the same business day or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> |
| <p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p> | <p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor and/or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p> | <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p> |

Escalation of Issues or Concerns: Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Operator/Director.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

Unity House Nursery School Operator/Director Pam Hearn-Erb, designated supervisor Carmena Alexander

Program Advisor: Bobbie-Jo Gramigna 226-974-1847 / bobbie-jo.gramigna@ontario.ca

College of Early Childhood Educators college-ece.ca

APPENDIX II

UNITY HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL Severe Public Health Outbreak Policy (as of March 2021)

In the event of a local, regional, or larger scale severe public health outbreak, Unity House Nursery School will follow guidelines set out by the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit and the Ministry of Education.

Unity House may also implement additional measures to ensure the safety and wellness of all children and staff members. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Adjusting the procedures for drop-off or pick-up of children, such as utilizing a one-way flow of traffic when entering the building, with one door designated as an entrance and a separate door designated as an exit.
- Limiting the number of family members that can accompany a child into the building.
- Screening for symptoms (which are identified by Public Health and/or the Ministry of Education), and restricting entrance for those with symptoms.
- Non-essential visitors may be restricted or may not be permitted to enter Unity House.
- Ministry staff and other public officials (e.g. fire marshal, public health inspectors, etc.) will be screened prior to entering the building and asked to wear necessary personal protective equipment as required by the current directives. These visits will also be recorded in our daily log book.
- Utilizing personal protective equipment as advised by Public Health and the Ministry of Education, for staff, parents and children.
- Adjusting daily routines and limiting or removing items in the classrooms that cannot be easily cleaned/disinfected.
- Following the direction of Public Health regarding isolation in the event that a child becomes ill during the day, as well as following Public Health or Ministry of Education guidelines for reporting symptoms of illness.

Unity House keeps daily attendance records that are organized by month and also makes note of daily absences in our logbook. Any visit by Ministry staff or other public officials will also be recorded in our daily log book. These attendance records and the logbook can be used to facilitate contact tracing, if necessary.

APPENDIX III

Anaphylactic Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: Unity House Nursery School

Date Policy and Procedures Established: September 2014

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: October 10, 2018

Purpose

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. It requires avoidance strategies and immediate response in the event of an emergency. These policies and procedures are intended to help meet the needs and save the lives of children with severe allergies and provide relevant and important information on anaphylaxis to parents, staff, students, volunteers and visitors at the child care centre.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for an anaphylactic policy for child care centres. The requirements set out in this policy align with [Sabrina's Law, 2005](#).

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

Individualized Plans and Emergency Procedures for Children with Life-Threatening/Anaphylactic Allergies

- Before attending the child care centre, the supervisor/designate will meet with the parent of a child to obtain information about any medical conditions, including whether the child is at risk of having or has anaphylaxis.
- Before a child attends the child care centre or upon discovering that a child has an anaphylactic allergy, an individualized plan and emergency procedures will be developed for each child with anaphylaxis in consultation and collaboration with the child's parent, and any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's care that the parent believes should be included in the consultation.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will include a description of symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction that are specific to the child and the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency based on the severity of the child's symptoms.
- The individualized plan and emergency procedures for each child will include information for those who are in direct contact with the child on a regular basis about the type of allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies and appropriate treatment.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will be made readily accessible at all times to all staff, students and volunteers at the child care centre and will be kept in the child's file, posted in the classrooms, posted in the lunchroom and posted near the medicine record file.

- **All** individualized plans and emergency procedures will be reviewed with a parent of the child before enrollment starts and when any changes occur to ensure the information is current and up to date.
- Every child's epinephrine auto-injector must be carried everywhere the child goes.

Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Anaphylactic Allergens

The following strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents must be followed at all times by employees, students and volunteers at the child care centre.

- Do not serve foods where its ingredients are not known.
- Do not serve items with 'may contain' warnings on the label in a room where there is a child who has an individualized plan and emergency procedures specifying those allergens.
- Ask the caterer or cook to provide the known ingredients for all food provided. The ingredients will be reviewed before food is served to children to verify that causative agents are not served to children with anaphylactic allergies.
- In cases where a child has food allergies and the meals and snacks provided by the child care centre cannot meet the child's needs, ask the child's parent to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented.
- Ensure that parents label food brought to the child care centre with the child's full name and the date the food arrived at the child care centre, and that parents advise of all ingredients.
- Where food is provided from home for children, ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Encourage parents who serve foods containing allergens at home to ensure their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending the child care centre (e.g. by thoroughly washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Do not use craft/sensory materials and toys that have known allergens on the labels.
- Share information about anaphylaxis, strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens and treatment with all families enrolled in the child care centre.
- Make sure each child's individual plan and emergency procedure are kept-up-to-date and that all staff, students, and volunteers are trained on the plans.
- Refer to the allergy list and ensure that it is up to date and implemented.
- Update staff, students, and volunteers when changes to a child's allergies, signs and symptoms, and treatment occur and review all updates to individualized plans and emergency procedures.

- Update families when changes to allergies occur while maintaining the confidentiality of children.
- Update or revise and implement the strategies in this policy depending on the allergies of children enrolled at the child care centre.

Communication Plan

The following is our communication plan for sharing information on life-threatening and anaphylactic allergies with staff, students, volunteers, parents and families.

- Parents will be encouraged not to bring foods that contain ingredients to which children may be allergic.
- Parents and families will be informed about anaphylactic allergies and all known allergens at the child care centre through the newsletter, by posting a notification in several locations within the school, and by following a nut-free policy already noted in the Parent Handbook.
- A list of all children's allergies including food and other causative agents will be posted in all cooking and serving areas, in each play activity room, and made available in any other area where children may be present.
- Each child with an anaphylactic allergy will have an individualized plan and emergency procedures that detail signs and symptoms specific to the child describing how to identify that they are having an allergic reaction and what to do if they experience a reaction.
- Each child's individualized plan and emergency procedures will be made available and accessible wherever the child may be present while receiving child care.
- The caterer, cook, individuals who collect groceries on behalf of the child care centre and/or other food handling staff, where applicable, will be informed of all the allergies at the child care centre, including those of children, staff, students and volunteers. An updated list of allergies will be provided to the caterer or cook as soon as new allergies are identified. The supervisor or designate will communicate with the caterer/cook about which foods are not to be used in food prepared for the child care centre and will work together on food substitutions to be provided.
- The child care centre will communicate with the Ministry of Education by reporting serious occurrences where an anaphylactic reaction occurs in accordance with the established serious occurrence policy and procedures.
- This communication plan will be continually reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of the child care centre and that it is effectively achieving its intended result.

Drug and Medication Requirements

- Where drugs or medications will need to be administered to a child in response to an anaphylactic reaction, the drug and medication administration policy will be followed including the completion of a parental authorization form to administer drugs or medications.
- Emergency allergy medication (e.g. oral allergy medications, puffers and epinephrine auto-injectors) will be allowed to remain unlocked or carried by children with parental authorization so that they can be administered quickly when needed.

Training

- The Director will ensure that the supervisor/designate and/or all staff, students and volunteers receive training from a parent of a child with anaphylaxis on the procedures to follow in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer emergency allergy medication.
- Where only the supervisor/designate has been trained by a parent, the supervisor/designate will ensure training is provided to all other staff, students and volunteers at the child care centre.
- Training will be repeated annually, and any time there are changes to any child's individualized plan and emergency procedures.
- A written record of training for staff, students and volunteers on procedures to be followed for each child who has an anaphylactic allergy will be kept, including the names of individuals who have not yet been trained. This will ensure that training is tracked and follow-up is completed where an individual has missed or not received training.

Confidentiality

- Information about a child's allergies and medical needs will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the child, except when information must be disclosed for the purpose of implementing the procedures in this policy and for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Procedures to be followed in the circumstances described below:

| Circumstance | Roles and Responsibilities |
|--|--|
| <p>A) A child exhibits an anaphylactic reaction to an allergen</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The person who becomes aware of the child’s anaphylactic reaction must immediately: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. implement the child’s individualized plan and emergency procedures; ii. contact emergency services and a parent/guardian of the child, or have another person do so where possible; and iii. ensure that where an epinephrine auto-injector has been used, it is properly discarded (i.e. given to emergency services, or in accordance with the drug and medication administration policy). 2. Once the child’s condition has stabilized or the child has been taken to hospital, staff must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> iv. follow the child care centre’s serious occurrence policies and procedures; v. document the incident in the daily written record; and vi. document the child’s symptoms of ill health in the child’s records. |
| <p>B) A child is authorized to carry his/her own emergency allergy medication.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Staff must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> vii. ensure that written parental authorization is obtained to allow the child to carry their own emergency allergy medication; viii. ensure that the medication remains on the child (e.g., fanny pack, holster) and is not kept or left unattended (e.g. in the child’s cubby or backpack); ix. ensure that appropriate supervision is maintained of the child while carrying the medication and of children in their close proximity so that other children do not have access to the medication; and x. Where there are safety concerns relating to the child carrying his/her own medication (e.g. exposure to other children), notify the centre supervisor/designate and the child’s parent of these concerns, and discuss and implement mitigating strategies. Document the concerns and resulting actions in the daily written record. |

Glossary

Anaphylaxis: a severe systemic allergic reaction which can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. Symptoms can vary for different people, and can be different from one reaction to the next, including:

- Skin: hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash
- Breathing (respiratory): coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain/tightness, throat tightness/swelling, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing
- Stomach (gastrointestinal): nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
- Heart (cardiovascular): pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded, shock
- Other: anxiety, feeling of “impending doom”, headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste in mouth

(Source: <http://foodallergycanada.ca/about-allergies/anaphylaxis/>)

Causative Agent (allergen/trigger): a substance that causes an allergic reaction. Common allergens include, but are not limited to:

- eggs
- milk
- mustard
- peanuts
- seafood including fish, shellfish, and crustaceans
- sesame
- soy
- sulphites which are food additives
- tree nuts
- wheat
- latex
- insect stings

Epinephrine: A drug used to treat allergic reactions, particularly anaphylaxis. This drug is often delivered through an auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen or Allerject).

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

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre.

Parent: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family (all references to parent include legal guardians, but will be referred to as “parent” in the policy).

APPENDIX IV

UNITY HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Date Policy and Procedures Established: November 20, 2023

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: November 20, 2023

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children who attend Unity House Nursery School.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at Unity House as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- UNITY HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL will ensure that any enrolled child is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that has been authorized in writing by the parent/guardian.
- UNITY HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Procedures

DROP-OFF PROCEDURE (Accepting a child into care)

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, a designated staff member will:
 - Greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - Ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up).
 - Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff will confirm that the person is listed on the child's registration form or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
 - If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up a child, the change in pick-up procedure will be documented in the daily written record (notebook by the phone) and communicated to the classroom teacher and/or staff member designated to close that day. A note will also be placed on the classroom attendance book.
 - Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. Where a child does not arrive at Unity House by 10am and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the classroom teacher will:
 - Inform the Director, who will then contact the parent/guardian. A phone call will be made to the parent/guardian. If no answer, a voicemail will be left asking for a return call to confirm the child's absence.
 - If no response is received by 11:30am, a follow-up email will be sent to the parents/guardians to confirm the child's absence.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has authorized in writing. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual), they will:
 - Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - Where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up at the scheduled pick up time, the classroom teacher or director shall contact the parent/guardian by telephone and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff will leave a voicemail message. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the school.
 - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child, the staff shall wait until the program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed."

Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 5:30pm, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. Staff shall stay with the child (and use a cordless phone), to contact the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up, if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact the other authorized individuals in the child's registration files. The Director will have a conversation with the parents/guardians at a later time, regarding expectations for pick-up time.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 6pm the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) 519-371-4453. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

Glossary

Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual: a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care program staff in writing can pick-up their child from care.

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre and home child agency.

Parent/guardian: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.

Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15

Safe arrival and dismissal policy

50. Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has a policy respecting the safe arrival and dismissal of children that,

(a) provides that a child may only be released from the child care centre or home child care premises,

(i) to individuals indicated by a child's parent, or

(ii) in accordance with written permission from a child's parent to release the child from the program at a specified time without supervision; and

(b) sets out the steps that must be taken if,

(i) a child does not arrive as expected at the centre or home child care premises, or

(ii) a child is not picked up as expected from the centre or home child care premises.