



GS CARE

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Guelph School-Age CARE Inc.

PARENT HANDBOOK

Version 9.2

September 2020

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Programs

GS CARE offers a high quality, before and after school program for children aged from 3.8 years up to 13 years. All programs are licensed by the Ministry of Education and led by RECE's (Registered Early Childhood Educators) along with OCT's (Ontario Certified Teachers), Child and Youth Workers and Leisure and Recreation program graduates.

GS CARE programs operate during the following hours:

Before school: 7:30am – 8:45am

After the program, Junior Kindergarten children will be walked to their classroom by GS CARE staff. All other children will be directed outside to the playground where they will be under the supervision of the School Teacher on playground duty.

After school: 3:15pm – 6:00pm

JK and SK children will be collected from their classroom by GS CARE staff or may be escorted by a school ECE/EA to the GS CARE classroom. All other students are expected to walk on their own to their GS CARE classroom.

Drop off and pick up

GS CARE staff and parents must ensure that a clear “transfer of care” happens at both drop off and pick up. There must be contact between the parent/guardian and staff at these times to ensure that every student is safe. **Students must be dropped off into GS CARE classrooms.** Staff will not release students until they have physically seen the parent/guardian who is picking up. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up a student, parents are asked to inform GS CARE staff. Parents should inform any one picking up their child that they may be asked for ID. Parents/guardians are asked to inform GS CARE if your child is going to be absent from the program for any reason (all contact information is on the last page of this manual). If your child does not arrive to program, we have to start a lengthy procedure to find them.

For safety and liability reasons, GS CARE staff will not release a student to anyone under the age of 18.

***During the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, the following Policies and Procedures will be followed as much as possible within the directives of WDGPH that indicates that parents/guardians/non-essential visitors are not permitted into school buildings and that social distancing protocols must be in place. Some aspects of the Policies and Procedures affected by the above may not be applied while the directives are in place.**

Use of school facilities

Each year, GS CARE enters into a rental agreement with the Wellington Catholic District School Board to rent the space in which we run our programs. As part of this agreement, there are certain conditions that GS CARE must comply with and they do include the following:

- Other than the areas specified on our contract, the rest of the school is closed. Students, parents/guardians/siblings are asked to adhere to this policy and are not permitted to enter any other classroom or any part of the school before school begins or beyond the end of the school day.

- Drop off and pick up must be through the designated entrances and exits at each GS CARE site.

GS CARE staff can assist with any questions regarding the above conditions.

Withdrawal from GS CARE

One month's notice is required when a student is to be withdrawn. If a student is withdrawn without 30 days notice, the parent/guardian will be responsible for paying the full monthly fee. The deposit will be returned if 30 days notice is given and there are no outstanding balances. If a full-time student is withdrawn part way through a month, the daily rate will be charged for any days attended in the month of withdrawal.

Schedule changes

Two weeks (14 days) notice is required when any schedule change is required i.e. dropping from before and after school to after school only, full-time after school to part-time after school etc. Agreement for part-time schedules will depend on the status of the waiting list for each site, if there are a number of families who are waiting for full-time care, it may not be possible to accommodate a part-time schedule unless another family can be found to share the space.

Program Statement

GS CARE is committed to providing a high quality program that assists families by providing a safe, reliable and nurturing program during out of school hours. GS CARE will focus on providing a respectful environment that fully supports the Four Foundations of Learning as identified in "How Does Learning Happen" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. Our programs are consistent with Ministry of Education policies, pedagogy and curriculum and the legislative and regulatory requirements for licensed child care centres as set out under Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) and Ontario Regulation 137/15.

In line with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy. (June 8th 2015), our program statement is a living document and references a number of Ministry documents which include:

- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
- Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children.

Our Program Statement will be reviewed and revised annually to reflect the best possible practice.

GS CARE Educators view our students as capable, curious and rich in possibilities, they and their families are effective partners in working with us to create safe, nurturing, engaging and stimulating environments in our classrooms.

Our programs reflect the four foundations of How Does Learning Happen?:

- Our students have a sense of **belonging** when they are able to make contributions to the environment around them, their contributions are valued and they are able to form relationships with others and feel a sense of connectedness.
- Our students are able to develop an understanding of the importance of physical and mental health and **well being**, focusing on self-care, a sense of self and self-regulation skills.
- Our students are involved and **engaged** and are able to develop and build skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and innovating. Our Educators realise that by providing our students with opportunities for self-exploration, inquiry, and age-appropriate risk, the students are acquiring life skills which will take them beyond our programs.
- Our students are capable and effective communicators and are able to **express** themselves through many mediums.

The Child Care and Early Years Act (2014) includes a number of goals for every licensed Child Care program in Ontario and ensures that each program outlines their approaches on how they will meet those goals.

***During the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, the following goals will be followed as much as possible within the directives of WDGPH that indicates that parents/guardians/non-essential visitors are not permitted into school buildings and that social distancing protocols must be in place. Some aspects of the goals may not be applied while the directives are in place.**

Goal “A”: *To provide a safe environment while encouraging students to make healthy and nutritional choices that support healthy development, well-being and a growing sense of self.*

Approaches: GS CARE meets all of the MEDU requirements under Health and Safety by providing annual Public Health inspections, Fire Certificates and Water Flushing and Lead Testing Results. Our Educators promote the health, safety and nutrition of every student by providing a safe and clean environment while including students in the process so that they are able to understand the importance of safety, responsibility and accountability. Snacks are monitored and healthy snacks are encouraged and explained. All Educators familiarize themselves with any Allergy Lists that are posted in our classrooms and demonstrate awareness of the protocols outlined on any Allergy Individual Emergency Plans.

Playground checks are conducted daily, monthly and annually.

All GS CARE staff, volunteers and placement students are required to undergo an orientation process, prior to working within our programs, which includes introductions to our Program Statement, our Staff Manual/Policies and Procedures and actual time in program to shadow our Educators.

All staff are required to review the Policies and Procedures on an ongoing basis during site meetings to continue their awareness and implementation. Policies and Procedures are also reviewed during monthly staff meetings to ensure that Educators continue their awareness and implementation. They are also provided with a copy of the Staff Manual for their own perusal (electronic copy).

Goal “B”: *To encourage and support positive, responsive and meaningful interactions between students and Educators, parents and the community at large. Includes Prohibited Practices identified in the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014).*

Approaches: GS CARE management recognise that qualified, well-trained and responsive staff are the key to facilitating this goal and during the hiring process, these qualities are forefront in any interviews that occur.

Our Educators encourage all students to communicate in a positive way and support them to self-regulate (defined as the ability to deal with stress and recover from it) through role-modelling and age-appropriate coaching. The ability of our Educators to build strong relationships with our students does have an impact on how each student learns to self-regulate, if students are provided with experiences, support and encouragement as they interact, they will grow confident in their abilities to manage. Students are provided with opportunities to develop self-regulation skills and be successful. Our Educators recognise each student’s individual stressors and provide them with the appropriate and necessary resources and skills to cope with and reduce their stress.

Educators, on a continuing basis, observe, reflect upon and adapt the learning environment and programming in order to support each student as they learn to self-regulate. All of our classrooms provide a cozy, private area for students to go to if they are feeling stressed and need space to cope effectively.

Interactions between our Educators and students remain respectful, safe and supportive. The GS CARE Staff Manual provides detailed information that staff use to promote self-regulation and coping skills in students and implementation is reviewed consistently during informal meetings with staff. GS CARE management continue to monitor interactions ensuring that they align with our program statement and beliefs. “Time out” is not used at GS CARE for any reason. The following practices are prohibited at any time:

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

Contravention of the above prohibited practices will result in the issue being addressed according to the strategies outlined in the GS CARE Staff Manual – page 20.

At GS CARE, our goal is always to work together with parents/guardians to ensure that each of our students succeed in our programs. However, if a student displays disruptive, destructive, physically or verbally abusive behaviour towards other students, teachers, anyone else and/or property, the following steps will be followed:

- staff will stop the behaviour in a calm but firm manner
- staff will redirect the student, accompanying them if needed to another activity and/or assisting them to calm
- when the student is calm, the staff will talk to them about the behaviour
- staff will assist the student in finding acceptable behaviour when faced with situations that challenge them
- the student (assisted by staff in needed) will complete a self-report form to discuss with their parents

If the behaviour continues after the above steps have been taken, a parent/guardian may be called to take the student home and there may be a one day suspension from the program. If the behaviour continues and our staff have worked closely with the student and parents over a period of time, employing agreed upon strategies, and none of the solutions employed are effective, the family may be asked to find alternative care arrangements.

There may be situations where it is not the behaviour of the child but that of the parent/guardian that may result in termination of care from our program. At GS CARE, we expect that parents/guardians and all other adults entering our sites will behave in a courteous, respectful manner as outlined in the policies of this manual. If, at anytime, an adults behaviour is deemed threatening, abusive or inappropriate, GS CARE reserves the right to terminate care without notice. Fees will be reimbursed on a pro-rated basis.

Goal “C”: *To provide an environment where students are able to engage in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and enquiry (HDLH page 37).*

Goal “D”: *To provide a responsive program where students are viewed as active participants in their own development and are able to learn through exploration and observation.*

Goal “E”: *To ensure an environment where students are viewed as active participants in the program and are encouraged to initiate their own play and exploration with support from Educators when and where it is needed.*

Goal “F”: *To promote an environment that plans and creates experiences where the learning and development of each student is supported.*

Approaches: Based on observation and through engaging with our students, our Educators know that students learn best by being involved in the program and by pursuing their own interests and ideas. Our Educators act as ongoing observers, listeners, responders, facilitators and provocateurs, gathering information from the students and offering initial resources and activities that the students can choose, explore, investigate, adapt and direct. Students are engaged through play, experimenting with different materials, manipulating objects, acting out roles and problem solving. This allows them to expand their own critical thinking skills, ask questions and make sense of the world around them.

Educators ask questions to provoke student's thinking and engage as co-learners along with each participant.

Our Educators realise the value of child-directed activities and teacher-directed activities and are able to adapt to either direction as the experiences unfold, recognising opportunities to stimulate student's thinking and create meaningful programs.

Each student is recognised as an individual with their own unique qualities of gender, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, language, socio-economic status, family environment and developmental abilities. Our Educators view each student and their families as valuable contributors and plan programs to reflect their diversity and enrich the environment. In responding to the uniqueness of each student, their family and community, our programs support their learning and development. We believe that inclusive programming leads to a sense of belonging in our programs for each student and their family. Staff encourage students and families to use our programs and classrooms to reflect their diverse social, cultural and linguistic perspectives so that they can see themselves reflected in the environment.

Goal “G”: *To provide a program that responds to the physical needs of the students on both an individual and a group basis, taking cues from the students and allowing them to steer the program as they become increasingly aware of their own abilities to self-regulate.*

Approaches: As our Educators build responsive and supportive relationships with each student, they become attuned to the moods and dynamics of not only the individual student but also the students as a group and are able to plan and adapt the environment, schedule and activities as needed. Our classrooms provide space and resources for individual, small group, large group, active and quiet activities. Students are encouraged and coached to make their own choices based on how they are feeling and what they are interested in at that time. Choices are respected and students are supported in communicating appropriately with their peers. Educators realise the value of outside play and schedule and engage in activities to promote large motor skills, participation, team building, fair play and inclusion.

The importance of engagement is recognized and students are allowed to become fully engrossed in an activity thus reducing the sometimes inevitable stress of specific, timed transitions. Resilience is modelled by allowing flexibility in program schedules depending on the interests and focus of the students.

Goal “H”: *To build strong and collaborative relationships with parents ensuring that they are visible and active partners with our Educators while their child attends the program.*

Approaches: Our belief at GS CARE is that our families are the experts on their children. It is integral to a successful program for all if there is a collaborative and co-operative relationship between our Educators and families. We want our families to have the support of a high quality, safe, reliable and licensed program which will provide peace of mind while they work. We demonstrate trust, respect, integrity, empathy and care in our relationships with our families and view them as partners whose influence is invaluable as we strive to meet the needs of our students.

Our Educators use bulletin boards, display boards and any available space in our classrooms to share the students learning with parents. Documentation takes the form of photographs, learning stories (written by both the students and staff), artwork, 2D and 3D creations and any

other medium that the students want to use and students are encouraged to invite their families into their classroom to share their experiences.

Communication and interaction with our families is part of our daily program, when knowledge is shared, it enhances the relationship and parents are secure in the fact that their child is a member of our family and their contributions are noticed and valued. Communication comes in all forms e.g. in person, by phone, by email and is facilitated by all staff at GS CARE including the Licensee and Programs Manager.

We have an “open door” policy for families and they are welcome into our programs at any time to share the activities and spend time with their child and the group as a whole.

We organise various events and activities for families such as Gallery nights to enjoy together and also seminars and information nights such as Finance workshops for parent/guardians without their children (we provide child care to assist parents in participating).

Any concerns that are brought forward by parents/guardians will be dealt with in a thorough, professional and respectful manner. Parents/guardians are encouraged to bring forward any issues or concerns that may arise to their child’s GS CARE teacher. If the problem is not resolved then the Licensee/designate can be contacted and a meeting will be scheduled between the parent/guardian, GS CARE teacher and the Licensee/designate to discuss strategies and solutions. We also have a detailed Policy related to Parent Issues and Concerns that clearly outlines the procedures for all parties to follow (see page 15).

In some cases a parent may wish to enroll his/her child in GS CARE, but with no knowledge of, or, limited English language. The Guelph and District Multicultural Centre Inc. provides interpretation services and will assist in the communication process. The Centre is located at 319 Speedvale avenue east, Guelph, ON. N1E1N4. (519) 836.2222 – www.gdmc.org

Goal “I”: *To build collaborative relationships with local community partners in order to provide our students with opportunities to explore and learn outside of the program.*

Approaches: GS CARE values community partners and their support, contributions and involvement in our programs. Our Educators are able to seek out community partners in the fields of support services, CMHA, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, counsellors etc for assistance and also direct parents to these support systems if needed.

As all of our programs are operated on WCDSB property, our relationships with the school community are vital to the success of our programs, our staff maintain these relationships at all times by continuing respect, communication and collaboration. Our staff make themselves known to Principals, teachers, office staff, custodians and other members of the school community and engage in ongoing dialogue on a daily basis.

Educators are encouraged to plan walks and activities that involve the local community, facilitating the exploration of local neighbourhoods and history.

PD day programs allow us to venture further afield by bus, into the outlying communities, where staff and students can take advantage of fun and educational activities by visiting farms, museums, nature trails, parks and other places of interest.

Goal “J”: *To support the continuing professional development of staff as they acquire a secure knowledge base in order to be effective co-learners with our students.*

Approaches: During our hiring process, a priority for GS CARE is to recruit candidates who are enthusiastic and passionate about continuous professional development. Our staff are encouraged and supported to attend workshops, seminars and conferences that will extend

their knowledge and in turn will enhance our programs. Staff are expected to stay up-to date with current developments in the field of Early Childhood Education and teaching and to reflect their learning in all aspects of the program.

Management are committed to keeping staff notified of any professional development opportunities that arise in the local community and beyond and do so through email and verbal notification. Staff are compensated for the time spent on professional development as well as any registration fees or supplies required.

Management also provide in-house professional development which is directly linked to GS CARE policies and procedures, specific situations that staff deal with, directives and current practices that come from the Ministry of Education and any other topics that staff request to be included. Staff are also asked to share their own professional development learnings during staff meetings which is, in itself, an opportunity for growth.

GS CARE management provide ongoing support and mentoring through daily visits to program sites.

Staff are encouraged to engage in critical reflection and discussion with their team members and other colleagues about pedagogy and practice in order to support continuous learning and growth.

GS CARE realizes the importance of fairly compensating our staff. As well as fully supporting professional development, we also encourage and support staff to take care of their own well-being. Each staff member can take two paid personal leave days per year and can also choose to join a fitness facility and have the yearly membership fee partly subsidised by GS CARE (up to \$10 per month). We provide a comprehensive benefits plan once our staff have been employed at GS CARE for one year.

Goal “K”: *To ensure ongoing review and evaluation of GS CARE goals and approaches and their impact on students and their families.*

Approaches: GS CARE Educators understand the need to reflect on a daily basis and assess their program and environment to ensure that it is meeting the needs of each student and that the environment is set up according to the interests of the group.

Through daily communication with students, colleagues and families, Educators are able to assess the impact of GS CARE goals and approaches to ensure that they remain current and effective and are truly reflecting a pedagogical approach whilst meeting the needs of our students and families. Our Educators use various forms of documentation to reflect the daily happenings in our program, this assists them in planning future experiences and gives meaning to what the students do and experience. Our documentation also provides an opportunity to make the students learning and understanding of their world visible – to themselves, to each other, to their families and to our staff. Students are able to see their developmental growth over a period of time. Documentation of the program also allows a dialogue with families about their child's experience and an invitation to parents to add their own documentation about their child's learning. Through discussion during informal and formal staff meetings, the goals and approaches contained in our Program Statement will be reviewed and reflected upon and this living document may be updated and modified as our stakeholders and programs dictate.

Inclusion Policy

GS CARE strives to provide a positive, accessible and supportive environment for all students and their families regardless of any academic or physical ability. Children of all abilities are accepted into our programs. GS CARE staff will consult with the Parents or Guardian to ensure

a “goodness of fit” between the family and the program and in order to gain an understanding of the student’s and family’s needs, wants and expectations of the program. We want to identify those students who need additional supports and ensure that those supports are in place upon enrollment. GS CARE staff are skilled in providing environments that allow for group and individual activities and allow students to develop relationships with each other, where all materials and activities are accessible to all students and where all students can feel that they belong.

GS CARE creates respectful and collaborative partnerships with parents and teachers in order to provide high quality programs and the best possible environment for each child.

Parental Custody and Access

With the challenges of separation/divorce, there comes with it many communication issues and stress for both the family and GS CARE. Please understand that we will only follow instructions that are outlined on legal Court Documents. Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that GS CARE has all required Court Documents and any updated information.

Parent Intoxication

If a parent arrives to pick up their child and GS CARE staff deem that the parent is under the influence of alcohol or drugs (observing physical appearance, behaviour and/or odour from clothes/breath), GS CARE will request that the parent call the other parent or a taxi to transport them and their child home. If there is any resistance to this request then GS CARE will call the police to ensure the safety of all involved.

Safety

Safety is a priority at all times. Staff are required to continuously monitor toys, activities, crafts, equipment and environment for any hazards and act accordingly. The outside environment is checked daily before the students are able to go out and staff ensure that they are always aware of where the students are playing and that the activities are appropriate.

Every GS CARE program is equipped with a comprehensive First Aid kit. All staff are required to have up to date certification in Standard First Aid/CPR Level C. Any new hire will be required to have their certification prior to commencement of employment.

During any off-property trips the teacher in charge will carry a First Aid kit, the students’ information sheets and a cell-phone.

GS CARE is a nut-free environment. If your child attends a morning program, please ensure, if they have had peanut butter or any nut products for breakfast, that they wash their hands, faces and remove any peanut/nut residue from their clothes before they arrive at the program.

We also have some children who have life-threatening allergies to other foods/products and you may be asked to refrain from bring these into our programs, our staff will make sure all parents know of any known allergens and parents can consult our allergy lists posted on the bulletin boards. Please see our Nutrition Policy (page 15) for more details.

PARENTS ARE ASKED TO REFRAIN FROM USE OF PERFUMED PRODUCTS DUE TO ALLERGIES BY SOME OF OUR STAFF AND CHILDREN.

Accident Procedure

All GS CARE Staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. In the case of an accident, staff will attend to the student using first aid principles. Staff will fill out an accident report for parents to sign upon pick up of the student and parents will be offered a copy of the report. On occasion, staff may call parents and let them know the details of what happened and that there is an accident report to be read and signed by the parent. Completed accident reports will be kept on site for three years.

Serious Occurrence posting

A Serious Occurrence is defined as a serious incident that may affect the health, safety and well-being of a student or students. As of November 1st 2011, all licensed child care centres are required to post information about serious occurrences that happen. Within 24 hours, GS CARE will post a Serious Occurrence Notification Form on site in a visible area for 10 days to support increased transparency and access to information for parents.

Emergency Management

GS CARE has emergency management procedures in place at each of our sites that take in to consideration the logistics and needs of each program. Staff at each site are trained on these procedures during their initial orientation and/or as the policies are up-dated and a review is conducted annually. If an emergency does occur, the Site Supervisor or the Licensee/designate will contact parents. Please talk to your child's teacher or the Programs Manager (519-240-0864) if you would like more details regarding our site specific emergency procedures.

Health

Prior to admission to GS CARE all parents are required to complete a medical report pertaining to the student. The report will include allergies and medical history of the student. Immunization records are kept by the schools therefore GS CARE will not need to retain them. However, the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014) does specify that all students must be immunized against six designated diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) If your child has not been vaccinated against these diseases, you must have an exempt form from the Ministry of Education (available online or from GS CARE) and provide GS CARE with a copy. In the event of any of these diseases appearing in our programs, those students who have **not** been vaccinated will not be allowed to attend GS CARE and may not return until the program is disease free. Fees are expected to be paid during this time.

A quick visual health inspection of students will be done as they arrive, and if any unusual marks are observed a student would be asked how he/she got them. A student may not feel or look well as they arrive and a teacher will check for other symptoms and decide whether to call a parent(s) or guardian. If the teacher suspects that the student may have a contagious illness, the student should be isolated if possible (away from other students but not out of supervision by GS CARE staff) until he/she is picked up. Anything observed will be documented in the program log book.

A student will be sent home if the following symptoms occur: a fever of over 100 degrees (37.8 degrees Celsius), vomiting, diarrhea, red eyes accompanied by discharge or any other illness symptoms that staff determine may be contagious. The student will be isolated away from the other students but still in the program room and the Parent/Guardian will be called. Students should be symptom free for 24 hours (or follow Public Health recommendations) before returning to GS CARE. All information must be documented in the program log book.

If 3 or more people become ill from the same illness, at the same time, the WDGPH Unit will be notified immediately as this may be an outbreak of a disease. Public Health may also be called for questions regarding observed symptoms. GS CARE staff will inform parents of any guidelines that are mandated by the Public Health Unit e.g. in the case of an outbreak of illness, the amount of time that an individual must be away from the program if showing symptoms, any increased measures for disinfecting toys and resources and will also document all cases of the illness to report to Public Health.

In the case of Head Lice being found at GS CARE, parents will be called to pick up their child. All eggs and live lice must be removed before the student will be allowed to return to GS CARE. Other parents will be notified that the program has been exposed to head lice. All information regarding any of the above situations will be documented in the program log book.

Medication Policy

GS CARE staff can be authorized to administer both prescription and non-prescription medication to students. A medication authorization form must be filled out and signed by the parent or guardian before medication can be administered. The medication must be in an original pharmacy container showing the student's name, Physician's name, name of medication, dosage, times to be given, purchase and expiry date and storage instructions. If Parents/Guardian require that the medication be given as needed – they must identify specific conditions or symptoms that staff must observe in order to administer the medication e.g. medication to be given as needed when student is coughing. Medication authorization forms are to be kept in program binders until medication is completed and then in the site filing cabinet for three years. Medication must be stored in a locked container away from the students. If the medication needs to be refrigerated, it must be stored in the school fridge as GS CARE is not permitted to have refrigerator in the classrooms. All medications including Epipens and Inhalers must be inaccessible to students at all times both inside and outside.

Epipen/Inhaler procedures

We do have a number of students who attend our programs that do use an Epipen or an Inhaler to treat severe allergies and Asthma. Epipens and Inhalers can now be stored in a student's backpack, in a designated storage pocket for quick access (the back pack must be stored in the program classroom and inaccessible to students) or in a fanny pack attached to the classroom binder. Parents/guardians are asked to inform GS CARE of any changes regarding a student's Epipen or Inhaler and are asked to check expiry dates on all medication provided.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any GS CARE classroom or on school property and playgrounds as directed in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

No smoking signs are posted in each classrooms

Nutrition

GS CARE does not provide snack during any programs. Students are expected to bring their own snack and they must be healthy and nutritious. Due to allergies, only siblings will be allowed to share snack. Parents should ensure that their child has an adequate number of snacks so that they have one for GS CARE. Morning students may bring their breakfast to eat during the program, if they wish to do so. All lunchbags are to have an ice pack if there are foods provided that require refrigeration. GS CARE does not have access to a refrigerator. GS CARE does not have access to a microwave so parents are asked not to provide snacks that require heating. Warm foods must be stored in a thermos. Snack time is ongoing in our programs, this encourages the students to listen to their bodies and eat when it is the right time for them.

STUDENTS SHOULD NOT BRING ANY FOODS CONTAINING NUTS OR NUT-PRODUCTS. GS CARE IS A NUT-FREE PROGRAM.

All snacks must be healthy and nutritional. Parents are advised to follow the Canada Food Guide when planning their child's snacks. GS CARE can provide copies of the Canada Food Guide to those parents who request it. Parents are encouraged to include whole wheat breads, crackers, fresh fruit(s), fresh vegetables, yogurt, cheese, real fruit juice or milk in their child's snack. Lunch bags/water bottles must be labeled with the student's name, if they are not, staff will label lunch bags/water bottles with the students name in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act CCEYA (2014).

Students are not allowed to consume candy, cookies, potato chips, soft drinks, chocolate or any other foods that are not nutritional (as deemed by Canada Food Guide) while attending GS CARE programs. Parents can consult the Nutritional Recommendations list from Public Health for suggestions (posted in our programs). GS CARE follows guidelines from the Ministry of Education (Child Care Licensing Manual) – *“Staff should monitor the content of snacks (daily) and bagged lunches (on PD days) and discuss with parents when there are concerns regarding the nutritional adequacy of snacks and meals”*. GS CARE will provide a snack (unsalted soda crackers and raisins) if snacks are forgotten or need to be supplemented due to the presence of allergen containing foods or foods of low nutritional value.

Due to life-threatening allergies in our programs, GS CARE does not permit any food or products from Tim Hortons and McDonalds restaurants in our classrooms. All families are required to sign agreement to the above when completing the online registration process before their child can be admitted into our program.

PD Day Programs (**will not be operating for the 2020-2021 school year*)

GS CARE does operate on PD days and registration for these days is on a first-come, first-served basis and we only operate at two sites in Guelph. Trips are planned and scheduled for all PD days. Parents/guardians, grandparents etc. are welcome to join us for the trips. Trips are not typically more than 60km radius from the School and transportation is usually by chartered bus or public bus. Students will be expected to bring their own lunch and snacks. All lunches and snacks must be healthy and nutritional. Parents are advised to follow the Canada Food Guide when planning their child's snacks and lunches. GS CARE can provide copies of the Canada Food Guide to those parents who request it. Examples of a lunch that meets the Canada Food Guide – **Snack:** fresh fruit, yoghurt, wholewheat crackers, cheese, rice cakes, unsalted bread sticks. **Lunch:** cold meat and cheese, pasta in a thermos, pizza. All lunches are to have an ice pack if there are foods provided that require refrigeration. GS CARE does not

have access to a refrigerator. GS CARE does not have access to a microwave so parents are asked not to provide lunches that require heating. Warm foods must be stored in a thermos. Staff will monitor snacks and lunches to ensure that they are healthy and nutritious, if they are not then GS CARE staff reserve the right to purchase a healthy and nutritious replacement snack/lunch and the parent will be asked to reimburse the cost when they pick up their child.

Students are not allowed to consume candy, cookies, potato chips, soft drinks, chocolate or any other foods that are not nutritional (as deemed by the Canada Food Guide) whilst attending a PD day. If a student brings a snack/lunch that is deemed unsuitable by the Canada Food Guide/Public Health, parents will be notified that, in the case of GS CARE providing a replacement snack/lunch for any reason, parents will be asked to reimburse GS CARE for the cost of the replacement snack/lunch.

Lunch bags/water bottles must be labelled with a child's name, if they are not, staff will label lunch bags/water bottles with the students name in accordance with the CCEYA (2014) .

Parents need to ensure that they talk to GS CARE staff before their child attends a PD day to have all the needed information and for pick up and drop off sites as these do change during PD days.

Communication With Parents/Guardians

On a daily basis, teachers will informally update parents/guardians on how their child is interacting with other students and in the program in general. Parents/guardians are encouraged to touch base with our staff and ask any questions bearing in mind that our staff are working in program and it may be difficult to conduct a private conversation. All families are encouraged to visit our classrooms at any time to see our programs in action.

Parent issues or concerns

Date Policy and Procedures Established: 09/01/2017

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: 22/02/2018

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).

Designate: A senior staff member appointed by the Licensee.

Supervisor: Senior staff who oversee all administrative tasks on site.

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

Student: a child who attends GS CARE

Placement student: an individual from a post-secondary educational institute.

Policy

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our programs and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with us. As outlined in our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the students, parents/guardians and staff, and foster the engagement of and 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 GS CARE 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 (1) 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, students, staff, placement 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 Family & Children's Services).

Conduct

Our programs maintain high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for our students. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

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

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a student

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 Family and Childrens Services of Guelph and Wellington County (FCSGW) directly – 519-824-2410 or 1-800-265-8300, website – www.fcsgw.org

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to FCSSW 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>

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee/designate in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program, Room Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, indoor/outdoor program activities, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to <i>the classroom staff directly or the supervisor or licensee/designate.</i></p>	<p><i>Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or contact the parent/guardian within one business day to arrange for a meeting</i></p> <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include: the date and time the issue/concern was received; the name of the person who received the issue/concern;</p>
<p>General, Centre or Operations Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to <i>- the licensee/designate.</i></p>	<p>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>
<p>Staff, Supervisor, and/or Licensee/designate Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to <i>the individual directly or the supervisor or licensee/designate.</i></p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, 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 one (1) business day or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>
<p>Placement Student or Volunteer Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to <i>the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or placement student or the supervisor and/or licensee/designate.</i></p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of placement 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 Licensee/designate.

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 (see contact information below).

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:

Noma Vales (Licensee) – 519-716-6622

Nanette O'Sullivan (Designate/Programs Manager) 519-240-0864

GS CARE Site Supervisors: Please see contact information on pages 22 & 23 of this Parent Handbook.

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 x3654 or email childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

County of Wellington Early Years Division - 519-837-3620 x 3095 or 1-800-265-7294 x3095 or email: childcareinquiries@wellington.ca

Parent/Guardian Resources

GS CARE is able to offer resources on specific issues that may arise for parents e.g. speech and language, behavioural issues, mental health. We have a number of leaflets and brochures that highlight agencies and organisations that can offer support to any parents that need assistance and our staff assist parents in accessing any needed resources. Please speak to any GS CARE staff if you have questions and/or concerns. Information is also posted on each GS CARE parent board located in or near each classroom. Parents can also access valuable information on the Early Learning Framework website at www.children.gov.on.ca/earlychildhood

Enrollment Forms

Upon enrollment of a student, Parents are required to fill out online Registration and Medical forms. Please make sure that any information on these forms is **kept up-to-date** and if changes or updates are needed then please let our staff know or contact Nanette or Noma with the details.

Staff

As required by the Ministry of Education all Primary staff are R.E.C.E.'s, (Diploma in Early Childhood Education), OCT (Ontario Certified Teacher), Child and Youth worker or a graduate of a Recreation and Leisure program. Preference for teaching assistants will be given to ECE and

Child Studies students and those individuals with at least 2 years of experience with children. Requirements for a Police Vulnerable Sector Check, First Aid/CPR training and required immunization must be met before employment commences.

Placement students and volunteers

GS CARE welcomes placement students (College and University) and volunteers into our programs to gain practical experience and enhance and enrich our programs. Students and volunteers are required to provide a Police Vulnerable Sector Check and immunization record prior to entering our programs and are never counted in ratio or allowed to be with any of our students unsupervised by a GS CARE staff.

Staff Babysitting

GS CARE recognizes that this is a valuable service for both staff members and parents; however, this policy has been implemented to provide clarity of some points regarding private arrangements between staff members and parents/guardians:

- GS CARE will not be responsible or involved in any private arrangements or agreements that are made.
- Out of hours work arrangements must not interfere with a staff member's employment at GS CARE.
- Parents should be aware that other adults accompanying a babysitter may not have a relevant Criminal Reference Check and it may not be appropriate for them to care for children.
- GS CARE will not be held responsible for any health and safety or other issues that may arise from their private arrangements.
- No member of staff is allowed to pick up a child from GS CARE unless they are a named person on the child's "Authorised Release" form.
- Parents/guardian's must sign a "Consent to hold harmless" form before embarking on any private babysitting arrangements with GS CARE staff.

Hours Of Operation

Monday to Friday (except PD day)

Morning: 7:30am – 8:45am

Afternoon: 3:10pm – 6:00pm

PD days (will not be operating for the 2020-2021 school year*)**

7:30am – 5:00pm (**Please note the earlier closing time**)

All statutory holidays are observed and GS CARE will be closed on those dates. GS CARE will be closed during school Christmas holidays and March Break as well as the months of July and August.

In the event of inclement weather, if school buses are cancelled but schools are open, GS CARE programs will run as usual.

WHEN SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES, GS CARE IS ALSO CLOSED.

Fee Policy

A deposit of \$200.00/family is required with acceptance of admission (refundable with 30 days notice of withdrawal as long as there are no outstanding balances). Students may not attend until all online registration forms are completed in full (including addresses and postal codes). The deposit, fees and miscellaneous charges (PD days, late fines etc) are payable by Electronic Funds Transfer and Pre-Authorized-Debit (PAD) Agreements must be filled in and submitted to GS CARE. Parents/guardians will be invoiced each month and the fee will be withdrawn electronically from the specified account on the 1st of each month (or closest business day) from September to June.

On-line registration forms must be completed and consent forms and PAD agreements received by GS CARE before a student can begin in the program.

For students who are returning to program or beginning in September, if circumstances change and they will not be attending, notice is required by July 15th otherwise the fee for September may be charged or the deposit forfeited.

Tax receipts will be issued by the last working day of January, for the previous year.

There will be a \$20 charge for duplicate receipts.

Full fees are required regardless of days missed due to vacation, illness, inclement weather, school and/or statutory holidays. For part time students, this means for the days they are registered for.

Non-Sufficient Funds

Should a payment be returned due to non-sufficient funds, GS CARE reserves the right to try one more time to debit the payor's account. GS CARE will do our best to contact the payor before the second debit attempt. There will be a \$20.00 charge to the payor for each NSF occurrence. In the case of an outstanding balance, if, within two weeks, there has been no attempt on the payor's part to reply to phone calls or emails from GS CARE, care will be terminated for non-payment of fees. If payment is not made in full **or** a payment plan is not agreed upon, GS CARE will utilize collection agency fees within two months. If a parent recalls a payment for any reason other than those specified on the PAD agreement, they will be responsible for the charge incurred which is \$35.00.

Waiting list Policy

We do maintain waiting lists for our programs and if space is available, priority is given to current part-time students requesting full-time spaces and then to sibling(s) of our current students on a first come, first served basis.

In order to receive priority, current parents must notify GS CARE of any siblings who will begin attending Junior Kindergarten by January 30th of the year that they will attend. If GS CARE is not notified by January 30th, siblings will be placed on the general waiting list based on their initial inquiry date.

Any other available spaces will be offered to those families on our waiting lists depending on their initial inquiry date, the age of the student and their schedule requirements.

Families can only join the waiting list 1 year ahead of when they require care and inquiries must be through email.

Offers of available spaces will be made by email.

Acceptance of an offered space must be made within 24 hours of the offer otherwise the space will be offered to the next family on the waiting list.

If an offer has been made on two (2) occasions and has not been accepted then the family will be removed from the waiting list **or**, on specific request from the family, returned to the waiting list, but at the bottom.

Families can call or email at any time to request their position on the waiting list but are required to contact GS CARE by email (nanette@gs-care.com) every six months to determine their position and to provide any updates to their information. In both instances, families will receive an email providing their current position on the waiting list.

If families do not contact GS CARE every six months, they will be removed from the waiting list. GS CARE does not charge any fees/deposit to place a student onto any of our waiting lists.

Fee Schedule

Monthly and Daily fees (effective September 2020)

All programs at all sites

Full-time (5 days a week)

Before and after school: \$404.00 per month

Before school only: \$166.00 per month

After school only: \$298.00 per month

Part-time (any schedule less than 5 days a week – if available)

Before and after school: \$24.20 per day

Before school only: \$11.60 per day

After school only: \$19.90 per day

Monthly fees have been calculated according to the calendar issued by the Wellington District Catholic School Board and you are not charged for PD days. The fees are based on an annual amount and divided into ten equal monthly payments.

Fee subsidy is available to families that qualify. You may contact the County of Wellington Subsidy Office to determine whether you qualify for subsidy. The office is located at 129 Wyndham St. N, Guelph, On. N1H 4E9 or call (519) 837-3620 for an appointment.

If families are partially subsidised, a deposit of \$200 is required (refundable upon withdrawal as long as there are no outstanding balances).

PD Days

Each PD Day: \$44.50 (**will not be operating for the 2020-2021 school year*)

Late Fines

GS CARE closes at 6pm (**5pm on PD days**). Each site has a cell phone and the closing time is determined by the cell phone network time.

Please ensure you have picked up your child and have left the school by 6pm.

Late fines will be charged at a \$5 flat fee if picked up within the first 5 minutes and then \$1 per minute thereafter. Late fines will be calculated based on the time displayed on the GS CARE site cell phone. Parents will be required to sign a Late fee form and Late fees will be payable by cash immediately as you pick up your child.

Contact information

Owner/Operator: Noma Vales 519-716-6622, noma@gs-care.com or gscare@sympatico.ca or info@gs-care.com

Programs Manager: Nanette O'Sullivan 519-240-0864
nanette@gs-care.com

On site contact information:

Guelph Locations:

GS CARE Sacred Heart, Guelph Claire (Supervisor) & Sheena– 519-240-4258

GS CARE St. Francis: Julie and Jen– 519-240-3527

GS CARE St. Ignatius: Krystal (Supervisor), Jennifer, Yoldoz, Shahina and Paula-Kay 519-239-5868

GS CARE St. John: Rachel (Supervisor) Serena, Hunter and Nicole – 226-755-0423

GS CARE St. Patrick: Carol, Nancy and Heather– 519-240-3782

GS CARE St. Paul: Firdous, Thea, Alice and Paula-Kay– 519-239-5991

Rockwood Location:

GS CARE Sacred Heart, Rockwood Heather and Lina – 519-829-5146