

**St. Joseph's Catholic School**  
**Child Care Programs**



**Parent Handbook**

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St. Joseph's Catholic School is pleased to offer child care programs to the families it serves and families in the community. St. Joseph's offers a 3 year old preschool program, a 4 year old preschool program, KinderCare, as well as Before and After School Care.

### **Philosophy**

Each child is a unique gift from God and it is our role to nurture their individual God-given gifts and talents and provide opportunities that will enhance their creativity, ability to problem-solve, and make healthy choices.

Our Pre-School Program strives to awaken the child's spirit and imagination and encourage the normal desire for independence and high self-esteem through creative play. Kindness, courtesy, and self-discipline are central to children's participation and learning, as are opportunities to observe, question, and explore ideas both independently and as a group. A variety of activities and projects are designed to help develop emergent competencies and skills.

Children learn through play and interaction with peers and adults. St. Joseph's Child Care Programs are committed to providing children with a safe and enriching environment that encourages a positive self-image, personal growth and development. We believe in enriching each child's development in terms of the whole child – spiritually, physically, intellectually, culturally, emotionally, and socially.

### **The Program**

St. Joseph's Child Care Programs provide a safe and healthy environment for children ages 3-12 years old, attending as much as possible to each individual's needs and development within context of the larger group. Children become socially responsible through processes that include positive modeling, assisted learning and encouragement, with an emphasis on respect for self, others, and the environment. Children will have opportunities to build and enhance their knowledge and skills and practice them in a supportive and caring environment.

### **Staffing**

Staff has been carefully selected based on relevant education, training, and experience. Thorough reference checks have been completed confirming their suitability as a responsible, reliable and caring child care worker. All employees and volunteers have completed a criminal record check in accordance to Child Care Licensing Regulations.

## Hours of Operations

Monday – Friday

Before School Care: 7:30-8:20 AM

Preschool classes: 3's Tuesday/Thursday 8:40-11:00 AM (Sept. – Feb.) and 12:30 – 3:00 PM (Feb. – June)  
4's Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:40-11:00 AM (Sept. – Feb.) and 12:30-3:00 PM (Feb. – June)

KinderCare: Monday – Friday 11:30 - 3:00 PM (Sept. – Feb.) and 8:40 - 12:15 (Feb. – June)

After School Care: Monday – Friday 3:00 – 6:00

The Program is closed for the following Stat. holidays:

BC Labour Day	Thanksgiving Day	Remembrance Day
Christmas Day	Boxing Day	New Year's Day
Good Friday	Easter Monday	Canada Day

The Program is closed between School Christmas closure and re-opening, and during Spring Break.

Preschool programs continue to operate on school Professional Development days. Before and After-School Care and KinderCare DO NOT operate on school Professional development days. A separate Superday program will be available on a first-come first-served basis for children in K-7, with priority going to children enrolled in St. Joseph's Child Care Programs.

## Arrivals and Departures of Children

When parents arrive, it is important to sign their child in and take the opportunity to speak to staff about the child's needs for the day. Take time to settle the child and say goodbye.

Please drop off children no earlier than the start time of the child's program. Doors remain locked until the program start time to ensure staff get time to prepare and time for breaks.

Please ensure your child is picked up immediately at the program's end time as there are several programs running back-to-back and in order to meet licensing requirements the Centre needs to ensure children are picked up on time. As well, please be sure to sign your child out and let staff know the child is leaving.

If your child will not be attending the Child Care Program on any given day please phone and let staff know of the absence, or leave a voice-mail message (available 24 hours a day)

## Lunches and Snacks

St. Joseph's Child Care Centre is a peanut-free environment. Please advise staff of any food or

other allergies.

Parents are asked to provide nutritious lunches and snacks for your children. No candy or junk food is permitted in the Child Care Programs. Feel free to ask staff for suitable suggestions for snack times. After School Care children will be provided with a snack each day.

There may be times when we have a group or special snack and we will let parents know in advance.

### **Toys from Home**

Children are encouraged not to bring toys from home to ensure they do not get damaged or broken. There may be times when the Centre will have a special "Show & Tell" and we would invite children to bring something of interest from home.

We understand that transitions can be difficult and your child may need to bring something special from home to help ease the anxiety of transition. Please speak to the Manager or staff about this.

### **Clothing**

Indoor shoes are required for all children and may be kept at the Centre.

Outdoor clothing is required, including mitts, hats, coats, and boots, as children are encouraged to play outside.

Sunnier weather requires sunscreen and sun-hats.

All clothing must be labeled. If unlabelled, staff will label it.

Clothing left in the Lost & Found will be donated twice a year. Parents will be given notice before the donation is made so that they can check for any lost items.

### **Open Door Policy**

St. Joseph's Child Care Programs have an Open Door policy, which means parents are welcome. Please respect the fact that this is your child's environment and respect his or her need for time to be in this environment with peers.

Be aware that staff may not always be available to chat as their primary responsibility is the children's well-being and safety. If you need to speak with the Manager or a staff member, please set up an appointment time that is mutually convenient so that staff can give you their full attention.

## **Parent Consent**

With your permission, staff will take photographs of the children from time to time to be used on display boards featuring children, families and staff. We will request written permission if we were to use the photos for any other purpose. If you are interested in purchasing copies of photos, please see the Manager.

## **Field Trips**

There will be times when staff plan Field Trips for children in the Programs. Parents will be informed in advance and parent volunteers may be required and requested. Families will be required to complete a “Field Trip Consent” form before their child can participate.

## **Health and Safety**

The Centre is a safe and healthy environment, and is in full compliance with Licensing regulations.

Please do not bring your child to the facility if there is any indication of illness. If the staff believes a child is sick and should not attend, the facility retains the right to refuse admittance. If a child becomes ill during the course of the program, the parent(s) will be contacted to pick the child up. Parents are required to keep their child home if the child exhibits any of the following:

- Has a communicable disease. Parents must notify the Centre if your child has a communicable disease so that other families and the Health Authority can be notified.
- Has a fever of over 38 degrees
- Has a skin infection or undiagnosed rash.
- Is not well enough to participate fully in all program activities, including outdoor play.
- Has green discharge from the nose that is undiagnosed.
- If a child receives a prescribed antibiotic, the child will not be able to return to the facility until 24 hours from the time of your child’s first dose of the antibiotic.
- Has diarrhea or vomiting.
- Has pink-eye.
- Has lice (until treatment is complete and the child is free of lice).

**Administering Medication:** Staff will only administer medication prescribed by a doctor. All over-the-counter medication must have instructions from a doctor before staff will administer them. Parents must complete a “Permission to Administer Medication Form” which is signed by a doctor, the parent, and the Manager. All medications must be in the original container and be clearly labeled. All medications will be stored in a locked container following storage instructions.

Children that require long-term medications (such as inhalers or allergy medication) must have the child’s medical requirements entered into our Medical Alert Book. This book includes specific instructions regarding medication, dosages, and time of administration. The staff will

keep a running daily total of dosages administered and any other pertinent information.

### **Nutrition**

Food provided for snacks will be selected in accordance with the Canada Food Guide. Parents are expected to provide a nutritious lunch or snack for their children in programs where it is not provided. Staff will:

- Prepare nutritious snacks with children (After School Program).
- Encourage children to eat a variety of foods.
- Be sensitive to individual and cultural food preferences.
- Follow food restrictions and allergies.
- Provide adequate time to eat.
- Never force a child to eat.
- Provide water for children to drink.
- Provide space in cupboards or the fridge for food or snacks.

### **Families will:**

- Inform staff of any food restrictions or allergies and any changes in diet.
- Provide nutritious snacks and lunches.

### **Emergency Procedures**

If a child is injured or becomes ill while at the Centre, Staff will immediately assess the situation and decide on what action to take. Outlined below are three procedures that may be followed:

First Aid Treatment: if first aid treatment is required, staff qualified in first aid will:

- Provide first aid treatment
- Acknowledge the child's feelings
- Provide close supervision to ensure the child does not require further first aid.
- Complete an Accident Report and give a copy to the Office.
- Inform the family in a timely manner – immediately in the case of a serious incident or at pick-up if the incident was minor.

Non-Emergency Medical Attention: if medical attention is required, staff will:

- Contact the parent/guardian
- If the parent/guardian is unavailable, staff will contact the emergency contact listed with the Centre.
- If the family emergency contact cannot be reached staff will contact the family doctor. If the doctor is unavailable, staff will proceed as if it is an emergency medical situation.

Once the family, guardian, or emergency contact has been reached, staff will:

- Access the child's medical file for information and permission.
- Arrange transportation for and accompany the child to the hospital or a clinic, with the medical information, and will meet the family there.
- Provide information to the doctor and family/emergency contact.
- Complete an Accident Report Form and file it with the Office.

Emergency Medical Attention Required: If emergency medical attention is required, qualified staff will administer first aid until the ambulance attendants arrive. Staff will:

- Call and request an ambulance
- Contact the family or guardian and arrange to meet them at the hospital
- If family/guardian are unavailable, staff will reach the emergency contact and arrange to meet them at the hospital.
- Access the child's medical file for medical information and permission.
- Accompany the child to the hospital along with medical information.
- Provide the doctor and family with information about the emergency
- Complete an Accident Report Form and file a copy with the Office.

### **Fire Drill and Evacuation Procedures**

Evacuation procedures and routes are explained to the children and reviewed on a regular basis. Fire drills are practiced at the Centre as required by Child Care Licensing. Evacuation procedures and routes are posted on the exit doors within the facility.

### **Earthquake Kits**

Upon entering the Child Care Program, each family is required to create an earthquake kit for their child. Parents will be provided a list of items to include in the kit. Please have this kit prepared by the end of the first week in September.

## **Centre Closure**

In the event that the Centre must close due to fire, an extended power or heating failure, extreme weather conditions, or an evacuation due to safety issues, staff will care for children until families or emergency contacts have picked them up.

## **Personal Safety**

All visitors that are not family must arrange, in advance, permission from the Manager to visit the Centre. Unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Community resources and partners and immediate family members are welcome to visit if prior arrangements have been made.

## **Suspected Child Abuse**

As required under the *Child, Family, and Community Services Act*, staff having reason to suspect that a child has been or may be physically or emotionally harmed, neglected, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a parent or other person, have a legal obligation report to the Ministry for Children and Family Development.

Even if unsure, staff has a legal obligation contact the Ministry and speak to an intake worker to get information. The decision to investigate lies with the Ministry.

Staff will document and date all observations, which will be kept in the child's file.

If a child discloses being at risk or likely to be at risk, staff will contact the Ministry and report the disclosure. Staff will not interview the child with regard to the details; interviewing the child will be completed by Ministry officials.

## **Suspected Child Abuse while at the Centre**

Staff will take steps to immediately protect the child from the alleged perpetrator, and contact the Ministry and Licensing, as required by law. Staff will continue to ensure the safety of all children in the Centre.

## **Custody and Access**

Parents who are separated or divorced are required to provide accurate information on custody and access arrangements to the Manager and staff.

To prevent a child being release into the care of a non-custodial parent who does not have access, a copy of the Custody Agreement or Court Order must be on file in the Centre. If there is no Agreement on file, staff cannot refuse or deny access to the non-enrolling parent.

If no Agreement exists and conflict between parents/families is evident, the Centre may refuse to care for the child unless both parents sign a written agreement confirming details of pick-up and access to information about the child.

If a Custody or Court Order exists, a copy of the Order must be placed in the child's file. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date information concerning legal guardianship of the child(ren). If this information changes at any time, it is imperative that staff be notified immediately. Without a Custody Order or Court Order on file, Child Care staff cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If the non-enrolling parent is not on the authorized pick-up list, the policy relative to unauthorized persons will be implemented. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing all consents.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Families are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns regarding all aspects of the program with the Manager and/or staff. If an issue arises, the goal is to resolve the differences and arrive at mutually satisfactory resolutions.

The following steps will be taken:

**Step 1:**

The enrolling parent will meet with the Manager or staff member to define the issue and state clearly their concern.

**Step 2:**

Solutions and/or appropriate resources are identified, where possible. A plan for dealing with the concern(s) will be shared between the staff and the enrolling parent.

**Step 3:**

If no resolution can be achieved directly between the parties, the enrolling parent will bring their specific concerns, along with documentation of attempts at resolution, to the Principal for further consideration.

## Termination of Service

Services will be terminated when:

- Fees for services are not paid by month's end and no alternative arrangements for payments have made.
- The Centre is unable to satisfactorily resolve an issue with an enrolling parent/guardian using conflict resolution steps.
- A child is persistently unwilling to abide by Centre rules and expectations, and has proven unwilling to change inappropriate behaviour.

## Program Fees (subject to change)

Fees may be paid by post-dated cheques or Pre-Authorized Debit. Please see the Manager for forms and PAD set-up. Fees area as follows:

3 year old preschool:	\$100/month
4 year old preschool:	\$150/month
KinderCare:	\$250/month
Before School Care:	\$115/month
After School Care:	\$175/month

Combination Fees:

KinderCare/After School Care:	\$375/month
Before & After School Care:	\$275/month
Before School Care, KinderCare & After School Care:	\$475/month

Based on the availability and scheduling, Before School Care and After School Care may be purchased on a drop-in basis and will be invoiced accordingly.

Drop-in Before School Care:	\$6/day
Drop-in After School Care	\$10/day

Priority for Before and After School Care goes to families who are using it on a full-time basis. The Manager will accommodate part-time and drop-in care where possible, but the Centre is bound by licensing requirements for child-to-staff ratios at all times.

## Professional Development Days

Professional Development Days are separate registration days and are available on a first-come first-served basis and will entail an additional fee. Please see the Manager for registration forms and further information

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays will be recognized for every child at the Centre. Something special will be done to acknowledge each child's special day.

## **Family Life**

Any major changes in your family life (the birth of a baby, a death of a family member or pet, separation or divorce) that might be a source of stress and effect a child's behaviour should be shared with the Manager, so that accommodations may be made and staff can assist the child in coping with feelings.

## **Communicating with Families**

The staff maintains a bulletin board in the cubby/entry way to share information with families. Newsletters will also be a method of communicating events and activities to parents, and staff will happily respond to inquiries regarding the program. A message box to place information to staff and Manager is in place. On request, the Manager will meet with parents privately, at a mutually convenient time, to discuss individual children.

## **Program Evaluation**

Staff will evaluate the program on an on-going basis, and parental feedback is welcome. Licensing also completes periodic inspections.

## **Things to Check Daily**

- Your child's art folder
- Parent bulletin board
- Parent mail
- Lunch boxes
- Cubby (we ask that parents help to keep this tidy as we have several children sharing a limited number of Cubbies.)

## **Release of Child Policy**

Children enrolled in St. Joseph's Child Care Programs will only be released to parents, guardians, and other individuals that the parents have previously listed on the "Release of a Child Consent & Registration Form". If a staff member does not recognize a person picking up a child, they will ask the individual to provide identification. If the person is not listed on the "Consent/Registration Form" the parents will be contacted before the child will be released to that individual.

Unexpected pick-ups must be pre-arranged by parents with childcare staff. The parent is required to FAX a written document authorizing the pick up of their child by a specifically identified

individual. Without this authorization, the child will not be released and will remain under the supervision of childcare staff. Parents are to provide as much notice as possible of an alternate person picking up their child.

If a parent or guardian arrives to pick up a child and is intoxicated or otherwise impaired, the staff member will follow this procedure:

1. Offer to call a relative or friend to pick up both child and adult.
2. Offer to call a cab.
3. Inform the parent/guardian that if they choose to leave the facility in the car with or without the child, police will be contacted immediately.
4. Call the Ministry for Children and Family Development if the staff member feels the child is at risk and/or in need of protection.

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

Please pick up your child promptly at the end of his or her program. Children must be picked up no later than the following times:

Preschool	11:00 AM
Afternoon Preschool or KinderCare	3:00 PM
After School Care	6:00 PM

If a parent is late, a late fee will be charged and paid directly to the staff member who had to stay late. Late fees are as follows:

- \$10 for the first 15 minutes
- \$1 for every minute after the initial 15 minutes.

If a child has not been picked up 30 minutes after the program end time, listed individuals on the Emergency Contact List will be contacted. If no one can be contacted, it is the Child Care Program's responsibility to contact the Ministry for Child and Family Development.

### **Guidance Policy**

St. Joseph's Child Care Programs operate on the belief that all children are unique individuals who learn through their interactions with peers, adults and their environment. The purpose of guidance in our Programs are to ensure a safe and healthy environment in which all children can feel secure, respected, and valued. As a child grows and develops, it is normal for them to explore a variety of behaviours in order to learn what are acceptable and appropriate ways of interacting with the world around them and the people in it.

St. Joseph's Child Care Programs use a variety of methods to assist children in choosing appropriate behaviours. Each child will be encouraged and supported to develop positive relationships with peers and staff. Staff will strive to role model appropriate behaviours for

children by showing respect to children, parents, co-workers and the environment. Staff will:

- Demonstrate care and affection towards children through appropriate forms of verbal and physical interactions.
- Provide clear, simple, and consistent limits regarding appropriate behaviours within the Programs. Limits will be offered in a positive manner. Harsh or belittling language will not be used at any time, nor will the use of any physical punishment.
- Respect that there is always a reason for a particular behaviour and will observe, problem-solve, and strategize to work with children to remediate unacceptable behaviour. As behaviour is a method of communicating needs and wants, staff will assist the child in learning appropriate ways to communicate needs and having them met in acceptable ways.
- Differentiate between the behaviour and the person, leaving the child's dignity intact.
- Verbally prepare the children for the transition to another activity.
- Communicate with parents about children's behaviour and guidance strategies.

## **Guidance Methods**

**Environment:** The physical environment will be set up in a way to encourage desirable behaviours and minimize conflict. Staff will observe and modify the environment as needed to promote positive behaviours.

**Modeling:** Staff will demonstrate respect, understanding, compassion, kindness, listening and cooperation in all interactions with children, parents, and colleagues.

**Choices:** Children will have access to a variety of choices so that they learn to make decisions, be self-directed, and discover things in their unique and individual ways. All choices will be given when appropriate and within clear limits.

**Routine:** daily routines and schedules will be kept so that children will know the expectations each day. The Program will have a balance between quiet and active play, indoor and outdoor play, and structured and unstructured play time.

**Limits:** When necessary staff will explain limits to children so that children can learn the reasons behind the limits in a way that children can understand. Appropriate alternatives will always be presented to children. Limits will be clear, simple, and consistent. Limits are in place so that children do not harm themselves or others by engaging in unsafe activities or play. Staff will clearly state what is expected, for example: "It is unsafe for you to run inside – inside we walk." or "I will not allow you to hit Jane – use your words to ask Jane what you want."

Positive Reinforcement: Children will be acknowledged for interacting in ways that are respectful, kind, helpful, and considerate. Children deserve positive feedback from those around them, and are more likely to repeat desired behaviours when they are shown appreciation for their positive interaction with others.

Redirection: Children will be redirected to other areas of play to change the circumstances that are creating undesirable behaviour.

Conflict Resolution: When conflict arises between children, the process will involve the children in resolving the problem. The children will be encouraged to express their feelings, discuss the problem, and brainstorm solutions with the assistance of staff.

Logical and Natural Consequences: Children will learn of the natural and logical consequences of their actions, for example: "If you cannot keep the water in the water-play table, you will be asked to play somewhere else."

In the event that none of the above methods are working, and the child may be at risk of hurting him or her self or another, the child may be removed from the situation in order to allow time for the child to reflect and calm down. Once calm, staff will discuss the situation with the child.

If persistent issues around guidance continue with a child, the Child Care Programs Manager will set up a meeting with the child's parents to discuss the situation and strategies to remedy the issues in a timely manner. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding guidance with the Child Care Program manager because, as partners in guiding the child's growth and development, it is crucial that staff and parents work closely and honestly together.

