



**Hand  
in Hand**  
Child Care Society

# **School Age Parent Handbook**

*We Put the "CARE" in Child Care!*

**Proudly serving the Abbotsford Community since 1994**

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## **Welcome to Hand in Hand Child Care Society**

Thank You for choosing our program. Please review the policies in this parent handbook; return the signed agreement form on the last page, this acknowledges that you have read and agree to the policies that we use when working with our families. Your annual registration fee also makes you a member of the Society.

Before and after school hours is a very important part of your child's day. We want to make sure your child is given opportunity to participate in a developmentally appropriate program that balances and complements their academic teachings and enhances their social experience at their school.

Hand in Hand operates a number of School Age Care programs throughout Abbotsford certified under the provincial Child Care Licensing Regulations and Community Care Facilities Act which is regulated by Fraser Health Authority. Their annual inspections reports have shown a strong history of Hand in Hand meeting the licensing standards set by the government by employing educated staff that has experience and knowledge of the regulation requirements.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the Society, programming or centre operations please do not hesitate to bring them to the attention of our Centre Manager. Centre phone numbers and email addresses are listed in section 4 of this handbook as well as on our website at [www.handinhand.ca](http://www.handinhand.ca).

Your feedback is important to us.

Keep this handbook as an easy reference during your child's stay at the centre.

We look forward to making this a remarkable experience for you and your child.

### **Our Vision Statement**

*“Impacting Communities by Caring Today”*

### **Our Mission Statement**

*Hand in Hand provides a safe, caring environment that helps children develop a solid foundation of skills that contribute towards future success in life and strong communities.*

## 1. History of the Society

Hand in Hand Child Care Society opened its doors in September 1994.

The name “*Hand in Hand*” was established with a vision that portrays images of teamwork and collaboration with parents, the school district and other community partners as we meet the early learning needs of the families we serve.

Hand in Hand operates on site at Abbotsford elementary schools where we provide 5 preschool programs as well as 14 before and after school programs for school age children 5 – 12 years of age. September 2021 will see the addition of a new Early Learning program on Clearbrook Road in our first facility separate from an elementary school. Preschool and daycare services will be available at this site.

## 2. Philosophy and Values

We value and believe in:

- ☺ Having Fun while building friendships in a safe and nurturing environment!
- ☺ Children knowing they are valued and accepted while developing social and life skills.
- ☺ Age and ability appropriate activities.
- ☺ Positive adult interactions and role models in our staff.

## 3. Program Administration

### 3.1 Board of Directors

Hand in Hand Child Care Society is a registered non-profit society governed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of parents and community members. Your annual registration fee also makes you a member of Hand in Hand Child Care Society. If you are interested in attending one of our meetings or representing your child’s centre as a Board member, please call the administration office for further information.

### 3.3 Annual General Meetings

As a non-profit organization, Hand in Hand Child Care Society is required to have an Annual General Meeting for our membership which is held in the fall of each school year. Board of Director elections occur at our Annual General meeting. Annual financial statements and reports are reviewed. Parental input is vital for the well-being and continuing success of the Society. We also welcome parent assistance with our fundraising ideas and efforts.

### 3.4 Employee Positions

**The Administration Team** consists of the Executive Director (ED), Financial Administrator, Program Coordinator, HR Coordinator, Financial Admin Assistant and the Office Assistant.

**The Centre Level Team** that works directly with your child consists of a Centre Manager, Supervisor, and Assistants depending on the enrollment numbers for each site. For children that require the assistance of a support worker in order to participate successfully in a program, we have a long standing partnership with the Supported Child Development Program that helps us to assess and provide the support needed.

## 4. Centre Information

### 4.1 Centre Contact Info

- **PS** indicates an on-site Hand in Hand preschool program

Administration Office	604-859-1843	<a href="mailto:office@handinhand.ca">office@handinhand.ca</a>
Aberdeen	778-369-0114	<a href="mailto:aberdeen@handinhand.ca">aberdeen@handinhand.ca</a>
Alexander	604-852-8229	<a href="mailto:alexander@handinhand.ca">alexander@handinhand.ca</a>
Blue Jay	604-852-0504	<a href="mailto:bluejay@handinhand.ca">bluejay@handinhand.ca</a>
Centennial	604-853-9376	<a href="mailto:centennial@handinhand.ca">centennial@handinhand.ca</a>
Dr. T.A. Swift <b>(PS)</b>	604-859-0717	<a href="mailto:thomasswift@handinhand.ca">thomasswift@handinhand.ca</a>
Godson	604-850-5293	<a href="mailto:godson@handinhand.ca">godson@handinhand.ca</a>
John Maclure	604-852-1622	<a href="mailto:jmaclure@handinhand.ca">jmaclure@handinhand.ca</a>
• <b>PM session ONLY</b>		
Mountain <b>(PS)</b>	604-850-3609	<a href="mailto:mountain@handinhand.ca">mountain@handinhand.ca</a>
North Poplar (ASIA)	604-859-3177	<a href="mailto:northpoplar@handinhand.ca">northpoplar@handinhand.ca</a>
Prince Charles	604-853-6156	<a href="mailto:princecharles@handinhand.ca">princecharles@handinhand.ca</a>
Sandy Hill	604-850-9541	<a href="mailto:sandyhill@handinhand.ca">sandyhill@handinhand.ca</a>
Ten Broeck <b>(PS)</b>	604-870-5671	<a href="mailto:tenbroeck@handinhand.ca">tenbroeck@handinhand.ca</a>
Terry Fox <b>(PS)</b>	604-859-5964	<a href="mailto:terryfox@handinhand.ca">terryfox@handinhand.ca</a>
Upper Sumas <b>(PS)</b>	604-852-8228	<a href="mailto:uppersumas@handinhand.ca">uppersumas@handinhand.ca</a>

**Hours of Operation:** Monday to Friday: Open at 7:00 am and close at 6:00 pm. Early openings (6:30 am).can be accommodated upon request at some centres.

All Hand in Hand programs will be closed for all stat holidays:

New Year's Day	Victoria Day	Truth & Reconciliation Day
Family Day	Canada Day	Thanksgiving Day
Good Friday	BC Day	Remembrance Day
Easter Monday	Labour Day	Christmas Day
		Boxing Day

**Age Criteria:** We offer before and after school programs for children between 5 to 12 years of age, attending kindergarten to grade 7.

Hand in Hand Child Care Society maintains appropriate liability insurance at all sites.

### 4.2 "Full Day" Programs

During Winter and Spring Break, Pro-D and other school closure days, as well as the months of July and August, we provide full day programs from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Only a few centres are opened on full days based on the needs of the families as indicated on the submitted monthly attendance calendars.

Parents will be notified well in advance of which centre locations will operate and where your child will attend.

## 4.3 School Closures

### 4.3.1 Severe Weather Closure

**In the event of district school closures due to weather conditions, emergencies, utility disruption (heat, hydro etc.), Hand in Hand child care programs will also remain closed.**

In severe weather conditions the decision to close schools is made by the school district superintendent who will inform media outlets by 6 am. The Hand in Hand Executive Director also has the authority to make a closure decision on behalf of the Society. Factors that go into this decision include staff and student safety, road and school ground conditions and whether centres can be fully operational. Announcements will be posted on our website [www.handinhand.ca](http://www.handinhand.ca) and our Facebook page as close to 6 am as possible.

- The following local media sources will be asked to provide closures:  
STAR 98.3 FM      Country 107.1 FM      News 1130      Global and City TV.
- If schools are open during extreme weather, Hand in Hand staff will attempt to arrive at the centre in a timely manner for opening times. However, employee's ability to arrive on time can be affected during adverse weather conditions. Please call the centre prior to leaving your home to ensure staff has arrived safely.
- Should a decision be made by the school district during the day to close schools, our staff will contact parents to come to pick-up their child as soon as possible.
- No refunds or credits will be issued for these closure days.

### 4.3.2 Professional Development

There may be 1 – 2 additional days during the school year that the program may close to allow staff to participate in important opportunities for professional development. Parents will be given a minimum of 60 days' notice for a pro-d day closure.

### 4.3.3 Unanticipated Closure of a Program

In the event of a disruption of services (hydro, water etc.) during program operating hours, the Fraser Health licensing procedure we follow is:

*We will wait for one hour for the disruption to be repaired while at the same time attempting to get an update from the service provider. After one hour of no service, we are required to notify parents of the closure and the need to pick-up your child.*

### 4.3.4 Permanent Closure of a Program

In the event a decision to permanently close a program is made by the Board of Directors, the parents will be given as much notice as possible to allow time to seek alternate child care arrangements. This notice will be a minimum of 60 days unless there are extenuating circumstances that will not allow that to happen. Past decisions to close a program involved financial sustainability or the school space was no longer available.

### 4.3.5 School District Job Action

In the event of school district job action disputes or disruption, Hand in Hand will receive direction from Abbotsford School District as to whether we are able to provide child care services. Parents will be notified in advance of centre operation changes to the best of our ability. As with Full Day programs we will combine with other Hand in Hand centres.

Credits and refunds may be considered by the Board of Directors depending on the circumstances regarding the length of time with the closures and how the Society is impacted by the job action.

## 4.4 Transitional Preparation Days

Hand in Hand will close all centres at the end of the school year for 3 days to allow staff preparation time to transition from the end of the school year to summer program operation and vice versa at the end of August.

No child care is provided during the transition days. Parents will be given a minimum of 60 days' notice of these closure days to allow parents time to make alternate child care arrangements.

**The last 2 weeks in August all centres will be closed. One week is for staff to prep for the September school opening. The second week all Hand in Hand programs have a full week of closure.**

#### **4.5 Respect Policy**

Respect will be shown to all staff, children, families, and community members at all Hand in Hand sites.

- We show respect to the children, the parents, and the staff by being considerate in our comments, and keeping our voices at an appropriate level, while using respectful language.
- We, in turn, ask parents to have the same respect for staff, children and other adults.
- Inappropriate outbursts of disrespectful language from a child or adult which is directed to staff, a child or adult will result in a warning and possible immediate discharge from the program depending on the severity of the incident.

This includes postings on social media deemed to be disrespectful in nature.

#### **4.6 Addressing Concerns or Issues**

Parents/guardians are to discuss concerns or grievances with Hand in Hand Managers in a respectful and professional manner.

- Share your concern with the Centre Manager or Supervisor in a discreet way, away from the children or other adults.
- If the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may choose to contact the administration office to speak with the Executive Director or our Program or HR coordinator.
- If after this step you feel your concerns have not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may request that the Executive Director forward your concerns to a delegated Board of Director member; they will contact you.

#### **4.7 Social Media**

Today's electronic ways of communicating are changing the way we talk to each other. We believe respectful face to face communication is the best policy when it comes to resolving problems/concerns a parent may have.

- Please act responsibly and consider the privacy of others involved and remember that everything you publish on social networks will be visible to the world.
- Due to privacy considerations, staff and parents are not to post pictures of children, parents, or staff members on a social media site without consent of the persons involved.
- In order to avoid misunderstanding when posting on social media we request comments regarding our centres or staff should only be done with the permission of that staff member.
- Even if you have the best intentions, you must consider that anything you put out there regarding another person can potentially harm the image of that person and possibly yourself.

#### **4.8 Confidentiality**

Parents will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement form as part of their registration package.

- To ensure confidentiality of all families, parents are requested to not post on social media any information regarding a child, family member or Hand in Hand staff to outside individuals or other child care providers.
- Staff will not share family or child information with another program or provider without written parental consent. Any concerns about the release of information should be discussed with the Executive Director.

**4.8.1 Ensuring Confidential Security:** All information on registered families will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the centre office. Staff will not disclose registered family and/or staff member personal information without obtaining written consent to do so.



#### 4.9 Keeping You Informed

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child or the program, please speak with our staff. We will inform you of any concerns that we may have in regards to your child.

It is imperative to keep our Managers informed of any changes in the home environment that may impact your child's sense of well-being as this can alter their behavior and attitude. This includes parental separation, illness in the family, moving or a similar situation.

Newsletters will be emailed to parents with information on activities, themes and/or fundraisers as well as important dates to remember, (e.g. closure days). Please take the time to read notices when received. The parent bulletin board will also post notices and information regarding the program.

### 5. Financial Policies

5.1 Fee Schedule – see the registration package and our website at [www.handinhand.ca](http://www.handinhand.ca)

#### 5.2 Registration and Enrollment

All Registration packages and payments are managed through our on-line child care program called Sandbox. **All parts of the registration package must be completed including setting up a payment account with pre-authorized debit (PAD) or pre-authorized credit (PAC) prior to a child's acceptance in a program.** The PAD/PAC account will be set up and managed through the finance department at the administration office.

- A Sandbox Parent Portal invitation from the Centre Manager will be sent to the parent. Parents must set up their account within 24 hours of receiving the invitation or it will expire.
- It is the parents responsibility to ensure that their child's Sandbox profile is completed prior to their child starting in the program
- An annual **non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00** per family must be paid at this time.
- Re-registration for the next school year will take place from April 1<sup>st</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Parents are required to submit an Annual Attendance Registration form and pay the annual registration fee at this time to reserve your space.
- Registration of new families will be accepted after April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- We require a current headshot photo of your child for identification purposes as per licensing requirements.

Re-registration of families for programs that operate at or near the licensing enrollment capacity, including a new admission of siblings, will follow the priority procedure below:

- Children currently attending full time in a centre.
- Siblings of children attending full time and will require the same amount of care.
- Children attending part-time and increasing to full-time with confirmation from the Centre Manager.
- Part-time needs will be prioritized by those that require a higher number of sessions of care on a consistent basis. Eg: A need for 4 days/week vs 2 days/week. This is decided by the Centre Manager.
- Siblings of children currently attending part-time.
- A transfer to another centre, based on availability & if the child will be attending full-time or part-time.
- The child is on the waiting list and requesting full-time attendance.
- Drop-ins based upon availability.

##### 5.2.1 Children Requiring Support

Some children need extra support to be successfully included in a child care setting. These services are provided through a partnership with the Supported Child Development Program (SCDP). They support children with developmental delays or disabilities in their physical, cognitive, communication or social/emotional/behavioural development. If your child has received support at another centre, your child will be referred to the SCDP for an assessment prior to their acceptance in our program. It is the parent's responsibility to organize this support and to develop a Support Plan through the SCDP.

Children who require a support worker for behavior concerns will be made familiar with our behavior agreement policy (Section 6.8.2).

### 5.3 Payment of Fees

#### 5.3.1 Monthly Calendars

- Calendars for the upcoming month will be available the first week of the current month.
- Calendars must be emailed to the centre no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the current month to reserve your space.
- Child care fees are due the first of the month via a preapproved PAD or PAC payment account.
- A pre-paid calendar can be submitted to the centre at the time that it is due and PAD/PAC will not be processed. Pre-payment can be completed via our website using the Stripe option (see section 5.3.4 below) or use your debit/credit card at the centre prior to the first of each month.
- **We do not accept cash or cheques.**
- **Fees are non-refundable, non-negotiable and no credits.**
- If parent fees are 30 days overdue, child care services will be discontinued until fees are paid in full.
- If your child is absent for illness, vacation or unscheduled centre closure, the fees paid will still apply.
- If you wish to withdraw your child from the program a written 30 days' notice must be emailed to the Centre and the Financial Administrator.

**Tax Receipts** for income tax will be issued to parents through the Sandbox Parent Portal by the end of February each year.

#### 5.3.2 Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) & Pre-Authorized Credit (PAC)

- Banking information or a void cheque will be required to set-up your PAD/PAC account.
- The set-up of your PAD/PAC account can take up to 10 days to be activated. If the form is submitted to [finance@handinhand.ca](mailto:finance@handinhand.ca) by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month any prior payments will be run for the 1st. If forms are submitted after the 20<sup>th</sup> payments will not run until the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month.
- Your child is not registered until PAD or PAC has been received at the Finance Office.
- Parent's must notify the finance department by email with a minimum of 30 days' notice of any changes to the monthly PAD payment amount or if there are changes to your banking information provided.
- If your PAD payments are altered, parents can request a temporary approval from the Financial Administrator to make payments by credit card through our Stripe payment option on our website at [www.handinhand.ca](http://www.handinhand.ca). (see below)
- After a calendar has been submitted, changes cannot be made **without permission from the Financial Administrator** at the administration office. If a change is approved, credits will not be applied until the next month.

#### 5.3.3 Stripe Online Payments via Hand in Hand Website

- Parents can make credit card payments using the Hand in Hand website at [www.handinhand.ca](http://www.handinhand.ca).
- Navigate to the "**For Parents**" section and scroll down the page to "**Make a Payment.**"
- Follow the prompts for the required credit card information along with your child's name and month you are paying for and select "**Make a Payment.**"
- When payment has been approved a confirmation email will be sent to the parent and the admin office.

### 5.4 Government Subsidy – Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)

- ACCB is available to qualifying families through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that all ACCB forms are submitted to the government.
- Hand in Hand's annual registration fee must be paid by the parent as subsidy will not cover this.
- Subsidized parents must submit their monthly calendars on time to reserve their space.

- The parent must pay the ACCBs portion of monthly fees until ACCB authorization is approved and payment is received from MCFD.
- Once the ACCB payment has been received, child care fees paid by the parent will be credited to their account.
- Parents are responsible for paying the difference between the subsidy authorization and the program's fees.
- Parent payment portions will follow the same policy as Section 5.3 above, including back payments owing to Hand in Hand from MCFD.

### 5.5 Late Fee Charges

- Fees not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the month will incur a **\$20 Late Fee** unless the parent has been approved for a special payment arrangement through the financial department.
- Parents will be notified through Sandbox requesting the late fee payment after the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the month. If payment is not received within 5 days after receiving the email, child care services will be discontinued until fees are paid in full.
- Outstanding fees over 30 days shall incur an interest charge of 1.5% per month.
- All fees, including late fees, left unpaid beyond sixty (60) days will be referred to a collection agency.

### 5.6 NSF Charges

- All NSF payments will incur a **\$30 Service Charge**.
- All fees including the \$30 service charge must be paid within 5 business days of notification. Late fees will apply for any outstanding fee re-payment after 5 business days. (See policy 5.5)
- If a parent has more than three (3) NSF payments, future payment may only be accepted in the form of debit, credit card, PAD, PAC or online via Hand in Hands website.

### 5.7 Drop-In Service

- Some centres are able to accommodate a last minute drop-in service depending on space availability.
- The fee for this service will be an **additional \$5.00 per session added to the daily fee**.
- We require as much notice as possible to ensure proper staff/child ratios are adhered to.
- Do not send your child to the centre without confirmation from centre staff; a **\$20 unscheduled drop-in surcharge** will be added if no confirmation was given by a staff member. (See policy 5.7.1 below)

#### 5.7.1 Unscheduled Drop-In Surcharge

- If a child arrives at the centre with no communication from the parent or no approval of attendance from centre staff, a **\$20 surcharge** will be applied on top of the regular daily fee. The surcharge fee is due that day at pick-up time.
- Parents will be contacted to confirm if their child was to attend and will be informed of the surcharge fee.
- If we have not made contact with the parent, the school office will be informed that your child was not scheduled to attend but is in our program.

### 5.8 Late Pick-Up

If you know you will be late picking up your child, please inform the centre as soon as possible so we can reassure your child that all is well. Your estimated arrival time and/or giving verbal authorization for an alternate pick-up person is required.

#### 5.8.1 Late Pick Up Charges

- After 6 pm a late fee charge of \$10 for the first 15 minutes and \$1.00 for every minute following will apply.
- This fee is payable to the staff member that has remained with your child.
- If the fee is not paid on the day of occurrence, a late payment will be applied at the discretion of the staff.

### 5.8.2 Late Pick-up with No Contact from Parent

If there has been no contact by 6 pm from the parent, staff will carry out the following procedure:

- A call will be placed to the parent(s) soon after 6 pm to inquire about arrival time.
- If no contact by 6:15 calls will be placed to all alternate contact numbers on the registration form.
- If your child has not been picked up 30 minutes after centre closure time (6:30 pm) and there has been no contact with a parent/guardian, the staff member is obligated to inform the Ministry of Children and Family Development - After Hours Emergency Services.
- Late fee charges will apply as per policy 5.8.1 – Late Pick-up Charges.
- If late pick up is a recurring problem, (i.e. 3 times in a 60-day period) continued participation in the program may be at risk.

### 5.8.3 Scheduled Absence from Program

- It is imperative that you notify the centre prior to the afternoon bell time if your child is scheduled to attend Hand in Hand after school and they have been picked up during school hours or at dismissal time.
- If no notice has been received, your child will be considered a “**missing child**” by the centre staff. Unnecessary time and stress is spent searching the school grounds without this communication from you.
- If your child does not arrive within 15 minutes after dismissal time on a scheduled day and it has been confirmed the child is not on school property, the Centre Manager will notify the parents.
- If the parents cannot be reached, individuals listed as alternate contacts will be called.
- Our **Missing Child Policy** (Section 6.9) will be implemented which will include calling the police and the admin office team to assist in the search.
- If a parent repeatedly fails to communicate their child’s absence to the centre, our policy will be:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Offence A verbal warning regarding our policy which will be documented in your child’s file.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Offence A **\$20 surcharge** will be applied for any occurrences after that.
- If “No Notice” is a recurring problem, (i.e. 3 times in a 60-day period) continued participation in the program may be at risk.

## 6. Program Elements

### 6.1 Arrival

All parents are required to sign their child in upon arrival using the Sandbox Parent Portal app. As part of our COVID Health and Safety Plan when restrictions are in place, parents will not be allowed in the building and must complete a daily health assessment for their child prior to dropping them off. Parents will be informed of the drop off/pick up procedures upon registration.

- Hand in Hand is not legally responsible for your child without an adult signing them in and a staff member receiving them at the door.
  - If your child will not be attending on a scheduled day, please notify the centre.
- Sharing private information with our staff that may impact your child’s time at the centre helps us to relate better to a change in their behavior or reactions while with us. Something as simple as a rough start to their morning or an upset at home can impact their day.

### 6.2 Departure

Parents are required to sign their child out at the end of the day, using the Sandbox parent portal app. If your child will be picked up by someone other than yourself, **you must notify the centre ahead of time**.

- If you have not notified us of a change in the regular pick-up person, your child will not be released to them. Ensure the alternate adult comes with photo ID as staff is required to confirm their identity.
- For liability reasons, staff is not permitted to drive children in their personal vehicles.
- Children will not be sent home in taxis, allowed to walk home alone or be released to anyone under the age of 19 years of age

### 6.3 Custody and Access

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent to provide a copy of a relevant Court Order or Separation Agreement or pertinent other custody information that may deny or “legally restrict” access by the child’s other parent or another family member.

**Without a copy of a court documentation on file, Hand in Hand staff has no right to deny one parent access over the other. If this situation arises, the staff will notify the enrolling parent.**

**It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent to inform centre staff immediately, in writing, of any changes to the original submitted documents and to provide a copy of any amended court orders.**

### 6.4 Unauthorized Pick-Up

If anyone other than the enrolling parent will be picking up your child, you must inform the centre. This includes even if the adult is listed on your authorized pick-up list.

- If you have not notified the centre of a change in the regular pick-up person, your child will not be released. Ensure the alternate adult comes with photo ID as staff is required to confirm their identity.
- Verbal authorization from the enrolling parent will be allowed via the telephone if a situation suddenly arises.
- Photo ID will be required by a pick-up person to confirm identity with centre staff.

### 6.5 Alleged Impaired Pick-Up

When it is alleged by a staff member that the pick-up person is impaired, it is the staff’s legal responsibility to do everything possible to prevent the alleged impaired person from leaving with the child. If a staff member has reason to believe that this adult is unable to adequately care for the child, the staff member will offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the adult and child **OR** offer to call a cab.

If the alleged impaired person chooses to get in the car with the child, the staff member will inform the person that we will immediately notify the police as they are endangering the safety of the child. If the staff member is worried that the child may be at risk or in need of protection a call must also be placed to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

### 6.6 Parent’s Request for Withdrawal

Parents are required to give one month (30 days) written notice when withdrawing from the program. Notice must be given by the first calendar day of the month. If sufficient notice is not given, one month’s fee will be charged in lieu of notice.

If you are not satisfied with our program and/or we are unable to accommodate your child’s needs, withdrawal from the program may be in the best interest of the child and family. In this case the one month notice will be waived.

### 6.7 Centre’s Request for Withdrawal

Hand in Hand has a 90-day assessment period.

- If your child has a diagnosis that can affect their ability to self-manage or if there is a history of behavioral concerns where support was required in school or in another child care setting, it is the parent’s responsibility to inform the Centre Manager at the time of registration. It may be decided that a support worker will be required to offer assistance in order for the child to attend.
- It is essential that parents share information upon registration with the Centre Manager that may impact your child’s successful experience at Hand in Hand. Every effort will be made by staff to meet the needs of your child. All information shared will be kept confidential.
- If we notice a change which causes concern regarding your child’s behaviour, we will share this with the parent. We may ask for permission to speak with your child’s teacher as we try to determine if the concern is centre based or is also occurring in other settings. We will work collaboratively with parents and the school to try to find a resolution to the concern.

- If after these steps have been followed, and after consultation with the Executive Director, it is determined that the well-being and safety of your child, other children or staff is being jeopardized, the parent will be required to withdraw the child without notice.

## **6.8 Social Agreement – Behaviour & Discipline**

It is our goal to help your child acquire life skills and acceptable social behaviors including self-management in a group setting. Our guidance and discipline techniques will be in the form of redirection along with consistency in setting clear limits and expectations of behavior to support your child's growth toward independence and social awareness.

Our staff will model patience and respect for all children, parents and co-workers. By working with the words of "The Virtues Project", we acknowledge each child's uniqueness and assist them in becoming a happy and healthy individual.

We believe in an open door policy with our families. Parents are encouraged to share concerns or ask questions if you are unclear about the handling of an incident in the centre including our guidance and discipline techniques. Staff will be happy to hear and answer your concerns.

### **6.8.1 Social Agreement (SA)**

The purpose of a Social Agreement is to set a group standard of expectations and to allow the children to have a role in deciding how they will treat each other while at any Hand in Hand program.

- At the beginning of each school year and the start of our summer program, each centre will develop a Social Agreement for the school year or summer session with input from the children.
- The Centre Manager will lead group discussions on behavior expectations and potential consequences if the Social Agreement is not followed by a child.
- The agreement, along with the consequences will be posted in the centre to be referred to as needed.
- A copy will be sent home with each child to review with their parents. The agreement will be signed by your child and the parent and returned where it will be kept in each child's file.

### **6.8.2 Behaviour Agreement (BA)**

Our Behaviour Agreement provides a framework for creating a safe and respectful environment in which the children are assisted in helping to understand the consequences of their actions when the Social Agreement guidelines are not followed. The agreement will be implemented when repeated unacceptable behaviour is displayed with the intention to assist the child in making better choices or if safety concerns arise with the same child.

Unacceptable behaviors that would be addressed through the Behavior Agreement:

- Deliberate physical aggression or verbal disrespect directed at a child or adult.
- Deliberate disobedience or defiance towards a staff member's request.
- Deliberate damage to the facility and/or equipment.
- Leaving the program without permission.
- Taking part in an unsafe act or endangering others.

If a child is showing any behaviours indicated above, our Behavior Agreement policy will be:

- Verbal Warning: Staff will speak with the child about our Social Agreement and what the next step will be if the behavior is repeated.
- The parent will be informed about the incident and what their child's role was in it.
- If the Centre Manager decides to implement the BA form, they will review it with the child and the parent at pick-up time. The parent will be asked to sign the form each time an incident is documented.
- The signed copy will be kept in your child's file.
- The Centre Manager will speak with the parent if the child is repeatedly displaying the same behaviour and a suspension from the program will occur as indicated on the form.

### **6.8.3 Program Suspension**

- Suspensions may be 1 – 5 days depending on the severity of the situation and if it is a repeated offence.
- Suspension will be immediate. The parent will be called to pick up your child a.s.a.p.
- If the Behaviour Agreement is continuously being broken and suspensions have not had an impact on the child, Hand in Hand has the right to implement the Request for Withdrawal policy (Policy 6.7)

### **6.8.4 School Suspension**

If your child has been suspended from school or is attending classes on a part-time basis due to a disciplinary situation at the school level, they will not be able to attend the Hand in Hand program until he/she is permitted to return to school for full days.

## **6.9 Missing/Wandering Child**

**Missing After School:** In the event a child does not arrive at the centre within 10 minutes after school bell time, a search for the child will be implemented following the procedure below:

1. A call will be placed to the school secretary to inquire if the child was in attendance OR if the child was picked up during the day by a parent. If the child was in class at bell time, the secretary will page the child through the intercom system to report to Hand in Hand.
2. A staff member will go to the child's classroom to confirm that the child was released by the teacher at bell time.
3. The school building & grounds will be searched with assistance from school personnel.
4. If the above is unsuccessful and the child has not been located, a call will be placed to the parent. If the parent confirms that their child should be with HinH, a call will be placed to the police.
5. If contact has not been made with the parent, calls will be made to the emergency contact before calling the police.
6. The administration office will also be contacted to provide assistance with the search.
7. Once the child has been located all parties involved will be contacted.

**Wandering Child:** In the event a child wanders away from the group or "chooses to walk away" from the program, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A search of the area to locate the child will be implemented.
2. If unsuccessful a 911 call will be made to the police.
3. Parents will be informed after the call to the police is placed.
4. The administration office will also be contacted to provide assistance with the search.
5. Once child has been located all parties involved will be contacted.

## **6.10 Extra-Curricular Activities**

If your child is participating in a school based extra-curricular activity, before and/or after school, parents are required to complete our Extra-Curricular Activity form. This includes activities on the school premises and/or an outing or event off the school premises

- Hand in Hand is not responsible for your child after their early departure in the morning or before their arrival to the centre after school.
- By giving permission for your child to attend an extra-curricular school activity, they may be unescorted to and from the activity.

## **6.11 Clothing and Personal Possessions**

The children will spend a portion of every day in outside play, except in severe weather conditions.

- Please ensure that your child is prepared for outside play according to the season and weather conditions. E.g. – coats, boots, mitts, summer hats, sunscreen, etc.
- Appropriate and comfortable clothing and footwear which allows for free play and participation in games and sports activities are recommended.

- **Warm Weather Wear:** Summer clothing should allow for your child to get wet or dirty. Please send “non-aerosol” sunscreen, a bathing suit, towel, and sun hat along with a change of clothes. Please put your child’s name on clothing and personal possessions.
- **Objects from home (“No-Techno”) Program:** Electronic games or personal items/toys from home will not be allowed at the centre. Hand in Hand will not be responsible for lost or damaged personal property.
- Each centre has a “lost and found” bin in the main entry area. Items that are not claimed by the end of each school term will be donated to a local charity.

### 6.12 Dress Code

Children’s clothing and attire is expected to be age appropriate and of a tasteful manner.

Unacceptable attire can include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing that is offensive or too revealing is not acceptable. Children may be required to change their clothing to comply with standards.
- **Children are not allowed on playground equipment wearing flip-flops** as they have proven to be a safety hazard on the playground equipment.
- Clothing promoting racism, sexism, violence and/or showing illegal product use.
- Clothing with inappropriate slogans and pictures. Jewelry and hats are also considered as attire.
- Crop tops, spaghetti strap t-shirts and bikinis are not acceptable.
- Hats are to be removed while in the centre unless permission has been given by the Centre Manager.

### 6.13 Nutrition & Health

**N.B. It is vital that parents indicate food allergies on the registration form.**

*A list of children and the severity of allergic reactions will be posted in a visible area.*

*We appreciate the co-operation of other parents if a centre has been deemed a “Food Allergy” centre.*

Healthy nutritional food choices support your child’s ability to sustain needed energy throughout their busy day. Parents are asked to send in foods that are ready to eat and that your child is able to manage with little adult assistance.

- Staff will not heat, cook or do food preparation for a child’s lunch or snack.
- Food will not be warmed in the microwave for safety and nutritional reasons.
- Lunches will not be stored in the centre refrigerator.
- Staff will encourage your child to eat what you have prepared for them.
- We gratefully accept donations to our snack cupboard as we provide daily snacks for “hungry” children. Suggestions for donations would be fruits, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, yogurts, apple sauce etc.

**Breakfast:** If, on occasion, your child has not had time to eat at home, parents may send breakfast to the centre. We request that your child can manage the meal on their own or with minimal assistance. Inform staff when you arrive that your child has not had breakfast. Breakfast may be eaten up to 15 minutes prior to school bell time.

#### **Full Day Programs:**

**Lunch:** Parents are to send a nutritious lunch as well as sufficient snacks to last through the day. Small portions of a variety of food items work well as it allows choices by your child. A suggestion is to have your child participate in their lunch prep as they learn to make healthy eating decisions.

**Snacks:** Nutritious snacks for the morning and afternoon session need to be included in their lunch. Candy, pop, gum, chocolate or other snacks lacking nutritional value will be left in your child’s lunch kit.



## 6.14 Field Trips

During full days – seasonal breaks and school closure days – the staff may plan an off-site field trip.

In order for your child to participate in a field trip, a permission form must be signed and returned to the centre. The permission form will indicate:

- The destination of the field trip and mode of transportation being used.
- The date and time of departure and arrival from the centre.
- Any associated costs for the field trip must be paid prior to the outing in order for your child to participate.
- If a child arrives after the group has left for a scheduled trip, your child's participation and/or our ability to provide child care may be impacted.
- Impromptu walks in the immediate neighborhood may occur on any day. We will post a notice on the entry door to inform parents of our estimated time of return. Parents have provided a signed consent form for these outings in the registration package.

## 6.15 Active Play

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommends that children 5 years and older should participate in at least 60 minutes of active play daily. Active play promotes healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement.

### After School

During school hours, children should be getting a minimum of 40 minutes of outside play daily; HinH programs requires all centers to provide a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity daily. This active play will take place outside on the playground/field or indoors in the school gym.

### Full Day Programs

During full day programs the children will get a minimum of 60 minutes of active play daily which will be spread out over the course of the day. Time will be spent on the playground, playing group games or taking a walk.

Please ensure your child arrives dressed for the weather.

## 6.16 Screen Time

Hand in Hand is a techno free zone – No cell phones, iPads, video games, or iPods will be allowed. Children have access to an array of toys, board games, arts and crafts materials as well as play activities.

### Full Day Programs

On occasion during a full day program, centre managers may decide to show a movie with a "General" rating. Movies will be pre-approved by the Program Coordinator prior to the showing. During the movie other play activities will be available for the children who do not wish to watch the movie.

# 7. Health and Safety

## 7.1 Medical Information

**It is vital that parents share your child's medical history with us at the time of registration (i.e. allergies, asthma, special medication, etc).**

- A medication information form will be filled out by the parent when a child has been identified with an allergy or if they require daily medication administration.
- We must be kept informed of any changes to your child's medical history after enrollment.
- All enrolled children are required to have a declaration of their immunization status included in their registration package.

## 7.2 Allergies

Some children are identified with a life-threatening allergic reactions. It may be an allergy to food items; while others are at risk with insect sting allergies.

### 7.2.1 Food Allergies

All Hand in Hand centres follow the school district policy and are “**NUT FREE ZONES**” to safeguard children at risk. Your cooperation and diligence by ensuring that only “nut free” food items are sent in with your child is appreciated. Children identified with allergies will be posted in a visible location in the centre for all staff to be aware of.

### 7.2.2 Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan (AEP)

Anaphylaxis is a severe and very quick allergic reaction for a child that is a result from exposure to foods, insect stings, latex, medications or other substances that has been identified as a severe danger to that child. Anaphylaxis can lead to death if not treated immediately.

- If your child has an AEP in place the enrolling parent must provide a copy of the care plan and we will ensure that all staff is trained to respond in the event of an exposure event.
- The AEP must include a recent headshot, description of the allergy, emergency procedure, contact information, and consent to administer medication.

## 7.3 Medication

A Medication Administration form **must** filled out and signed by a parent for any medication (prescription and non-prescription) to be given to a child while at the centre.

Licensing Procedures that must be followed:

- Medication must be handed directly to a staff member.
- The medication **must be in** the original dispensed container or original packaging for non-prescription medicine. E.g. Tylenol, Benadryl.
- The medication form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent including the name of medication, the dosage and time to be given.
- A non-prescription medication form will be used if you feel your child may develop symptoms and you may want us to administer that medication. We will call the parent prior to giving the medication. We do not dispense cough drops to a child.

**Do Not Send Medication in Your Child’s Backpack.** This includes asthma puffers.

**Please Note:** If medication does not come in the original dispensed container or original packaging or the medication form is not filled out completely, **we will not** administer the medication.

## 7.4 Immunization

All children are required to have a current copy of their immunization records as part of their registration package.

- In the event a child is not immunized and there is an outbreak of a communicable disease in the centre, the child will not be able to attend until the contagious stage has passed.
- In the event of a communicable disease outbreak and your centre does not have a current copy of your child’s immunization record; your child may not be able to attend.

## 7.5 Illness

**Communicable Disease:** If your child contracts a communicable disease, **you must notify the centre immediately** as we are required to alert other families. Your child will not be able to attend for the full quarantine period. As a Fraser Health requirement, a doctor’s note will be required confirming complete recovery prior to re-entry to the centre. Please keep your child at home if they are not well enough to participate in program activities, both indoor and outdoor. Any of the following symptoms requires them to be at home:

- An acute cold, with coughing, sore throat or a runny nose with green liquid discharge.
- A fever of 101° F/38.3° C or above.

- Difficulty in breathing – wheezing or a persistent cough.
- A stomach ailment, including diarrhea, cramps, loose stool, nausea / vomiting.
- Pain – any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Infected skin, eyes or an undiagnosed rash. Severe itching of body and scalp.
- Children with known or suspected communicable diseases.

In the event that your child arrives at the centre or develops any of the above symptoms while in the program, the parent/guardian will be called to pick-up their child as soon as possible. We will isolate and care for your child, however, we are not equipped to keep a sick child for an extended period of time.

## 7.6 Head Lice

Head Lice is a communicable disease and can be spread easily from person to person.

- Head Lice does not indicate poor personal hygiene or an unclean environment but it can be a nuisance to control.
- Through cooperation of parents, staff and the school, we do our best to manage outbreaks as they occur.
- With confirmed cases, you must keep your child at home for a minimum of 24 hours and complete thorough treatments to keep the lice from spreading and to ensure a re-infestation of your child/home does not occur.
- If it is confirmed by our staff that your child has head lice, the parent/guardian will be required to pick-up your child as soon as possible.
- Your child will not be able to return to the centre until treated, including a thorough combing of the entire head with a nit comb.
- When the child returns to the centre, staff will perform a head check. If live nits are still present, you will be required to take your child home and continue the removal of the nits.
- We require the lower portion of the Head Lice letter that was sent home with your child to be completed when they return.

## 7.7 Injury

**Minor Injury:** If your child sustains a minor injury while at the program, we will provide first-aid and will report the incident to you. Depending on the treatment required, a minor incident form may require your signature for our records.

**Major Incident:** In the case of an injury requiring medical or dental attention, the child's parents will be notified immediately. If we are unable to contact a parent, the alternate contact person will be called.

- If contact with the parent or alternate contact has been unsuccessful and it has been deemed that medical treatment and/or emergency transport is necessary, we will call an ambulance for assistance.
- If transport to a medical facility is required, a staff member will accompany your child to the nearest emergency facility. Any expenses incurred in this situation will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

## 7.8 Emergency Procedures

Our staff maintain current first-aid certification and earthquake preparedness training.

Emergency procedures related to fire, earthquake and evacuation of the premises are practiced monthly.

In case of a fire, long term power failure, extreme weather conditions or an evacuation of the centre due to a real situation, parents will be notified as soon as possible of the alternate location of where to pick up your child. Parents will be notified when possible or by a notice posted at the centre.

## 7.9 Suspected Child Abuse

If a Hand in Hand staff member has reason to suspect abuse of a child may have occurred at the centre involving staff or a volunteer.

- The alleged person will be removed from the centre immediately.

- This will be reported to the parents, the Executive Director/Program Coordinator, Fraser Health Authority – Licensing Facility and The Ministry of Children and Family Development.

If a staff member has reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a child has occurred outside the Hand in Hand centre (e.g. at home or by a relative).

- This will be reported to the Executive Director/Program Coordinator and the Ministry of Children and Family Development as required by law.
- It is our legal responsibility to report suspicions/disclosures to the appropriate parties, not to determine if abuse has occurred.
- Our primary concern is for the health, safety and well-being of the child.

## 8. Pandemic Policy

An **epidemic** is the rapid spread of a disease to a large number of people in a given population within a short period of time.

A **pandemic** is an epidemic occurring on a scale that crosses international boundaries, is widespread and infectious while affecting a large number of people.

### 8.1 Health and Wellness Measures

Hand in Hand has developed its epidemic or pandemic response under the guidelines of Fraser Health Authority, the Ministry of Health and permission to operate our programs from the school district. Our Health and Safety policy (Parent Handbook - section 7) continues to be applicable during a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. Any temporary changes to our health and safety policy during a pandemic/outbreak will be communicated via email, our website and social media and will link to the authorized source of information that our temporary change is based on.

As a licensed child care centre we are required to follow all directives given to us by the above legal authorities, including a mandatory order to close our centres for public health reasons. Their decision overrules any decision to stay open that any child care centre may wish to make.

In the case of an outbreak, Hand in Hand will follow the guidelines outlined in our Pandemic Health and Safety Plan manual. The manual is a working document and is posted at each centre and can be accessed through our website at [www.handinhand.ca](http://www.handinhand.ca). Notice of all closures will be posted on our website, social media and Facebook page.

Our Hand in Hand plan is to emphasize the most important goal in our centres – **Prevention.**

### 8.2 Prevention Planning

- Following recommendations from Fraser Health and the Public Health Office.
- COVID-19 protocols for all staff, children and family members who are displaying respiratory illness symptoms; will not attend any Hand in Hand site.
- Physical distancing will be encouraged as best as we can with the children and limiting close contact with others. “Keeping hands to self” will be taught.
- Children will not bring toys, equipment from home.
- Children need to bring their own water bottles and can be filled from a faucet.
- Regular hand-washing protocols and cough/sneeze etiquette for all students and staff.
- Increased sanitizing on high-touch surfaces and a set schedule for routine cleaning.
- Children who appear to have any flu-like illness on arrival, or become ill during the day will be sent home asap and must be separated from the other children until picked-up.
- When possible the sick person should wear a surgical mask when near other children and staff.
- Any food provided by our program will be served directly to the children by a staff member.
- Children will be outside as much as possible.
- We have air purifiers in each of our rooms

- Other than Hand in Hand employees, adults will not be allowed in the building. Parents who need to meet directly with one of our managers must make an appointment by phone, email or text. The meeting will be held outdoors or on a social media app.
- If a parent requests to come in and see the centre, appropriate measure will be taken to ensure the health and safety of the centre, including pre-planning the meeting time, wearing a mask, and hand sanitizing upon arrival.

### **8.3 Staffing / Ratios**

Child to staff ratios as per the provincial child care licensing regulations is required during operations, regardless of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. If there is a shortage of staff available to work which is affecting the required staff to child ratio. (E.g. - being asked to isolate), Hand in Hand may be required to reduce our operating hours, or rotate days of space availability, or perhaps close a centre temporarily. This decision would be made by the Executive Director, with guidance from the Board of Directors. Any alterations to operating times/days will be communicated to parents via our website, social media and email to the best of our ability prior to the changes being made.

### **8.4 Individual Exclusions**

If it has been recommended by the Ministry of Health for an individual to quarantine due to travel or linked to a potential exposure or is showing symptoms; Hand in Hand will require all family members, including other children to comply with this recommendation. Please share this information with your Centre Manager **asap**. If this occurs, we will also contact Fraser Health with this information and it will also be shared directly with the other families in a confidential manner. These exclusions will apply equally to all children, families and employees.

### **8.5 Respect Policy**

Respect will be shown to all staff, children, families and community members. During trying times, fear-based interactions/responses can lead to comments and actions possibly stemming from bias and racism. These actions can lead to conflict between parents, educators and community members. Hand in Hand has an inclusive, respect-based philosophy (Section 4.5) and works to provide a safe space for all staff, families and children. Inappropriate outbursts or disrespectful language will not be tolerated. Any such acts will result in a warning and/or possible immediate dismissal from the program depending on the severity of the incident.

*Your child's safety is our first priority.*

**Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent Handbook.**

**Please sign the Parent Agreement Form (next page) and return to the centre**



## Parent Handbook Agreement

***This sheet must be signed and returned to the centre prior to your child attending in a Hand in Hand program.***

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the policies and information outlined in the Hand in Hand Child Care Society Parent Handbook.

By signing this document, I hereby agree to abide by the policies and information in this handbook.

Parent Comments:

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Parent Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Centre Manager Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date