



# Parent Handbook

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## **Welcome**

Welcome to Wild Wapiti Playschool. We're so happy you're here!

This guide provides essential information about our program and philosophy, as well as our policies and procedures. We believe that clear communication is key to building a positive and effective partnership.

We encourage you to read this handbook thoroughly, and to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. Our goal is to work together to provide the best possible early learning experience for our kids.

Thank you for being part of the Wild Wapiti community!

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to enhance Fernie's childcare capacity, providing a safe and stimulating environment for children, and enabling families to contribute effectively to our community.

## **Philosophy**

At Wild Wapiti Playschool, we nurture our kids' curious minds and kind hearts through child-led play-based learning, positive reinforcement and role-modelling.

We celebrate each other's uniqueness and support each child to grow, learn and discover in their own style.

Wild Wapiti Playschool is a safe and stimulating environment that provides opportunities promoting each child's independence, and sense of worth and belonging to both our group and local community.

We ground our learning by exploring our local and natural environments, and where possible encourage nature-based outside play and experiences with natural materials.

We believe each child is uniquely valuable, and must be treated with respect and dignity by other children, and by all adults within our community.

We value our educators by providing livable wages and continuous learning opportunities and professional development. We know that the knowledgeable, engaged and empowered staff will make meaningful and lasting impressions on each child.

### **What is play-based learning?**

At the heart of our educational philosophy lies a cornerstone principle: child-led play-based learning. But what exactly does this entail?

Child-led play-based learning is an approach where children take the reins of their own learning journey. It's about fostering an environment where they explore, create, and discover at their own pace, guided by their interests and curiosities. Instead of structured activities dictated by adults, child-led play empowers our young learners to make choices, solve problems, and express themselves freely.

What does it look like in action? We step away from monthly themes, academic worksheets, and cookie cutter crafts, and replace it with a room filled with a variety of materials, open-ended toys, and space for imagination to flourish. You might observe children building intricate structures with blocks, concocting imaginary worlds in dramatic play corners, or collaborating on art projects inspired by their surroundings.

Our skillful educators at Wild Wapiti Playschool intentionally select materials and activities to provide to the children as choices for play. They create planning sheets to have ideas and activities on hand, based on student interest, that suggest extensions to topics of interest and integrate multiple areas of development. They facilitate peer interactions and coach children as needed through problems or conflicts. They carefully watch children in play to observe for evidence of growth in multiple areas of development, as well as evidence of our school values of curious play, kindness, independence, community, and sustainability.

But why is child-led play so beneficial? Research shows that it cultivates critical skills beyond the classroom. From problem-solving and decision-making to communication and social-emotional development, children engage in holistic learning experiences that build a genuine love for education and lay a solid foundation for future academic success and lifelong learning.

In essence, child-led play based learning honours the unique capabilities and innate curiosity of each child. It celebrates the joy of discovery, the power of imagination, and the beauty of learning through play.

## **Communication**

**Contacting Classroom Educators:** If you need to reach out to your child's classroom educators, we encourage you to use the brightwheel messaging feature. Brightwheel provides a convenient platform for direct communication with our educators, allowing you to stay informed about your child's progress and activities.

**Manager Contact:** For any issues or concerns that require managerial attention, please feel free to email the manager at [manager@wildwapitiplayschool.ca](mailto:manager@wildwapitiplayschool.ca).

**Newsletters:** Monthly newsletter will be sent on brightwheel to keep you up to date on upcoming events!

**Pictures/Videos/Activity Updates:** You can view regular pictures, videos, and activity updates directly on brightwheel. This feature enables you to witness your child's learning experiences firsthand and stay engaged with their daily activities at Wild Wapiti Playschool.

**Calendar:** Keep track of upcoming events, holidays, and important dates by accessing the calendar feature on brightwheel.

**Website:** Visit our website to find our school policies, handbook, fundraising links, and calendar.

**Absence Reporting:** If you know your child will be away, let your educators know as soon as possible by messaging them on brightwheel!

**Emergencies:** If anything arises that requires immediate attention, feel free to call our office phone at 250-278-9200.

Meetings with WWPS manager, staff or board can be arranged if needed.  
Make sure to update your email address and phone number if it changes, so you can be reached at all times.

## **Program Information**

### **Hours of Operation**

WWPS is open from 7:45 AM - 4:45 PM Monday to Thursday. 7:45 AM - 12:15 PM Friday.

### **Statutory Holidays and other closures**

New Year's Day

BC Family Day

Good Friday

Victoria Day

Canada Day

B.C. Day

Labour Day

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Thanksgiving Day

Remembrance Day

Christmas Day

Wild Wapiti Playschool will be closed between, and inclusive of Christmas Eve and New Years Day.

In the case a Statutory Holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Wild Wapiti Playschool follows School District 5's calendar. During the Summer, we will observe the holiday on the following Monday.

Wild Wapiti Playschool will also be closed one Friday per year for professional development. A minimum of one month's written notice will be provided when this date is set.

### **Family Involvement**

At WWPS, we value community and believe that family involvement is key to creating a positive and inclusive environment for our children.

To foster this spirit of collaboration, we ask each parent to join a parent committee for the year. This not only helps in spreading the load—because many hands make light work—but also provides a valuable opportunity to engage with fellow families and shape our childcare experience together. At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year, you'll have the chance to explore different committee roles and make changes if desired.



There are 5 Parent Committees and they are described further below:

- **Classroom Support:** Fulfill a weekly set of tasks to support the staff and classroom activities. Examples include cutting, laminating, or even returning books to the library. The Manager will have everything ready for pickup on Monday mornings. You will need to complete the task at your convenience and return it by Thursday morning or earlier. Each parent on the committee will be responsible for one week, and the roster will rotate through as needed.
- **Social:** In charge of the Winter and Spring social gatherings; this includes renting a space, decorating, organizing food and activities. The committee also arranges the Staff holiday party and group gift from parents.
- **Fundraising:** Responsible for planning and executing 2-3 fundraising events a year. This may include tasks such as creating and distributing promotional materials, managing event logistics, tracking fundraising progress, and ensuring timely communication with the childcare community. Their efforts ensure successful initiatives that directly support the childcare's programs and resources.
- **Maintenance:** Participate and execute a set of tasks as defined by the manager and/or board to provide a safe and enjoyable environment at the playschool. Tasks and access to the playschool after hours will be arranged at a routine frequency determined by the number of tasks.
- **Garden:** Participate and execute a set of tasks to enhance the garden area at the annual spring and fall work parties. Goals will vary based on what is needed each year, which may include building play structures, weeding, staining, and adding new mulch and sand to play areas.

Please note to volunteer for any special field trips or events, we require that all parent volunteers provide a copy of a recent criminal record check, a character reference form, and a statement of immunization status. These will be collected via brightwheel.

Your participation is vital and deeply appreciated!

## WWPS Fees

### Society Membership Fee

WWPS has an annual membership fee of \$500 per space. The fee covers WWPS' financial year from June 1st to May 31st.

If your child's enrollment begins part way through the year your membership fee is prorated as follows:

Start date between June 1st -August 31st: \$500

Start date between September 1st-December 31st: \$374

Start date between January 1st-March 31st: \$206

Start date between April 1st - May 31st: \$84

This fee is non-refundable if you choose to withdraw your childcare from WWPS for any reason. For children who age-out of WWPS and enter kindergarten a prorated portion of the membership fee will be charged at *\$42/month*. For example, children registered from June 1 - September 30th will be charged \$168

### Child Care Fees

The financial viability and continued operation of WWPS is dependent upon childcare fees being paid in full and on time. Fees are due on the 21st of the month prior and are assigned based on the age of your child and not necessarily the program they are attending. Costs are shown below:

#### **12-18 Months (per month)**

Full time: \$1182

Part time - 2 days/week: \$568

Part time - 2.5 day/week: \$821

#### **18-36 Months (per month)**

Full time: \$1263

Part time - 2 days/week: \$615  
Part time - 2.5 day/week: \$888

### **36 Months to School Age (per month)**

Full time: \$1087  
Part time - 2 days/week: \$489  
Part time - 2.5 day/week: \$707

Fees are required to be paid by e-transfer on the 21st of each month.  
Fees are payable by e-transfer to [hello@wildwapitiplayschool.ca](mailto:hello@wildwapitiplayschool.ca)

### **ChildCare Fee Reduction Initiative**

WWPS is currently accepted into BC's Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI).

With CCFRI in place, fees are reduced by \$900 for Infant-Toddlers and \$545 for 3-5 year olds for full-time spaces. If WWPS has not been approved, or the funding not received, the full fees are required on the 21st of each month. If, and when, the funding is received, families will be reimbursed.

The fees after the CCFRI are as follows:

#### **12-18 Months (per month)**

Full time:  $\$1182 - \$900 = \$282$   
Part time - 2 days/week:  $\$568 - \$360 = \$208$   
Part time - 2.5 day/week:  $\$821 - \$540 = \$281$

#### **18-36 Months (per month)**

Full time:  $\$1263 - 900 = \$363$   
Part time - 2 days/week:  $\$615 - \$360 = \$255$   
Part time - 2.5 day/week:  $\$888 - \$540 = \$348$

#### **36 Months to School Age (per month)**

Full time:  $\$1087 - \$545 = \$542$   
Part time - 2 days/week:  $\$489 - \$218 = \$271$   
Part time - 2.5 day/week:  $\$707 - \$339 = \$368$

This funding could change at any time, and should reductions be adjusted parents will be notified immediately.

## **Affordable Child Care Benefit**

Parents are responsible for applying, and re-applying as necessary, for the Provincial Affordable Child Care Benefit. Parents receiving subsidies are responsible for the portion of their childcare fees not covered by the benefit.

More information can be found at the [ACCB website](#).

## **Late Payment Fee**

If payment of fees is late, there will be a \$10 per day charge until payment is made in full. If fees are still outstanding after 7 days, the child cannot continue to attend WWPS, until payment (including additional charge) is made.

## **Late Pickup Fee**

You are deemed late if you are not physically on site at the time of closing at 4:45pm and signed-out. You are expected to take full responsibility for your child's supervision after this point. Please notify staff via Brightwheel, if you anticipate a late pick up.

If a parent or authorized person is late picking up their child, a late fee of \$5 per five minutes will be charged. After 5 minutes, parents will be contacted. If, after 20 minutes, WWPS staff cannot get in contact with the parents, an authorized person will be contacted for pick up. If an authorized person is not able to be reached after another 20 minutes, the Ministry of Children and Family Development child services will be contacted.

Late Pickup Fee invoices will be provided immediately at pickup and will be due within 48 hours of the incident. Payments can be made via e transfer to [hello@wildwapitiplayschool.ca](mailto:hello@wildwapitiplayschool.ca) and will be paid out to the employee who remained on site. If payment is overdue, the child will not be allowed to return to care until payment is received.

## **Extra Drop-In Days**

Families currently enrolled at WWPS on a part-time basis, may request extra days of childcare. If additional days are required throughout the month, please email the Manager at [manager@wildwapitiplayschool.ca](mailto:manager@wildwapitiplayschool.ca) or send a message to 250 278 9200, a minimum of 24h in advance.

If space is available, you will be notified by email or text message and invoiced on the next month's bill.

Extra-Day Fee is \$40/Day and is not eligible for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. Once your day has been approved and your child is scheduled, you are responsible for the fee whether your child attends or not.

### **Refunds**

If WWPS is closed for more than 3 business days due to unforeseen circumstances (power outage, flood, snowstorm, etc.) a refund will be issued for those closed days. WWPS will abide by, and be closed for, all statutory holidays in British Columbia. Full monthly fees are charged regardless of days missed due to a child's illness or vacation.

### **Withdrawal from WWPS**

We understand that families' circumstances can change, and you may need to withdraw your child from our program. If you wish to withdraw your child, we require one month's written notice. This allows us to make any necessary adjustments to our staffing and resource levels.

Failure to provide one month's notice may result in fees being charged for the duration of the notice period. We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to our withdrawal policy.

### **Maternity/Parental Leave policy**

Children already enrolled at Wild Wapiti Playschool who have a parent on parental leave may reduce their days to 2 or 2.5 days/week, while holding their full time spot for when they return, no later than 18 months from the first day of leave.

A 6-18 month contract will be made with a parent of the next eligible child on the waitlist to fill the resulting empty spot. The child with the temporary contract spot will then be prioritized to receive a spot after the parental leave ends. While not anticipated, if the maternity/parental leave contract can not be filled, it is ultimately the responsibility of the family on leave to pay the full fee to hold their child's spot for the duration of the contract.

## **Termination of Services**

WWPS reserves the right to terminate childcare services to any child rendered at any time, under but not limited to, the circumstances below. WWPS Manager will make every effort to resolve an issue or discrepancy on a family by family basis, however their discretion can be used for any circumstance, in order to determine if childcare services should be terminated.

- Outstanding unpaid fees
- Child exhibits continuous disruptive and violent behaviour toward others, themselves, or staff (after the resources available have been exhausted or no childcare support worker is physically able to be employed to help support the needs of the child with an inclusive care plan. )
- Child is continuously unable to participate in regular programming of 2+ hours of outdoor play due to a lack of weather-appropriate clothing or a refusal to wear weather-appropriate clothing.
- Child is late being picked up four times within a rolling year period (school calendar year September 1 to August 31)
- Parents or guardians behave disrespectfully towards staff and/or Board of Directors
- Not following WWPS sickness policy and continuously sending a child when they are ill with symptoms present since drop-off, not for a sudden on-set during the day (e.g. four times within the school calendar year)

# Your child's day at WWPS

## What to pack

Children should have the following items with them everyday:

- Two changes of seasonally appropriate **and labelled** clothes (to be left at WWPS).
- A pair of **labelled** indoor shoes (to be left at WWPS). Comfortable, with no laces and able to foster your child's self-sufficiency.
- Food and water
  - A **labelled** water bottle (large enough for field trips).
  - A healthy lunch (and fork or spoon if needed).
  - A morning and an afternoon snack packed separately
  - A **labelled** lunch box that is large enough to fit all items in and with working, quality zippers for your child to do by him/herself. Reusable containers or bags are highly recommended and ones that are also easier for your child to do (or learn how to do) on their own.
  - If a food item is desired to be hot, please pack it in a separate thermos.
- **It is important to note that at WWPS we have a strong focus on outdoor time. Each child is required to be prepared to go outside daily. Please review our Dress for Success section below.**
- Small blanket or sleep sack, and two crib sheets for the IT room.
- All materials for cloth or disposable diapering (please see Diapering Policy for more details).

Your child will have their own cubby assigned to them. You may leave spare clothes and indoor shoes here. Wearing indoor shoes helps us keep our floor clean and ensures that everyone has footwear in case of an emergency where we need to leave the building quickly. **Labelled** personal items from home intended for naptime are permitted (stuffy, blanket, soother), but please refrain from bringing toys. Personal items are brought at the discretion of the families and staff are not responsible for any lost or broken items.

**Please label ALL of your children's belongings.**

## **Dress for Success: Outdoor play**

Dressing for success means wearing clothing that allows you to be comfortable and active in any weather. Please invest in some quality gear for the success and joy of your child during their Wild Wapiti Playschool days. **Please label all items of clothing, bags and backpacks.**

### **Late Spring/Summer (warmer weather)**

- Closed-toe supportive shoes/Rubber boots
- Thin long pants and long-sleeved shirts recommended (this will help protect from scratches, sun damage and insect bites)
- Waterproof pants & jacket
- Sun hat
- Swimsuit and swim diaper if required
- Sun block (please check expiration date)

### **Early Spring/Fall (cooler weather)**

- Thermal long underwear and shirt (see winter wear)
- Fleece pants
- Fleece or wool top, hoody or pull over
- Waterproof rain pants and jacket/Muddy Buddy
- Closed-toe hiking shoe and/or comfy insulated rubber boots (Kamik insulated boots are recommended)
- Thinner toque or hat and light knitted gloves
- Wool or wool-blend socks (can be thinner)
- Sun block (please check expiration date)

### **Winter**

To participate safely in winter weather, it is especially important that children are dressed properly. Layering clothing is the best way to stay warm and comfortable.

- Base layer (the layer closest to the body)
  - Thermal long underwear and shirt – Wool fibers are best for staying warm and keeping moisture away from the body but they can be expensive. Synthetics are readily available and more affordable and work well too. Avoid cotton as it retains moisture and makes us feel cold.
  - Wool or wool-blend socks, fairly thick, but comfortable in the boot.
  - Middle Layer - Fleece pants (fleece is so cozy and quick to dry, comfortable and warm)



- Fleece or wool top, hoody or pull over
- Outer Layer
  - Water-resistant snow-suit; Water-resistant snow pants with a bib work nicely to keep the upper body insulated along with a snow jacket.
  - Winter boots. Recommended brand: Sorel or Kamik (Bogs brand boots are NOT insulated enough to keep feet warm on the coldest winter days)
  - Wool toque or hat that fits snugly and covers the ears
  - Insulated, waterproof gloves or mittens with a waterproof outer layer able to tuck inside or overtop jacket. (2 pairs needed every day).
  - Wool/fleece neck warmer (much safer than scarves)
  - Sun block (optional)
  - Hand/foot warmers are great if your child suffers from cold hands and feet

## **Weather Safety Policy**

The following policies are followed for extreme weather.

### **Sun Safety:**

If the UV rating is 4 or higher, sunscreen will be applied and hats will be worn.

### **Heat Safety:**

When playing outside, water bottles will be easily accessible to the children and shaded areas will be available. Children will be encouraged to take water breaks regularly and to dress appropriately. Children will be kept inside if temperatures are above 35C

### **Storm Safety:**

Children will stay/move inside if lightning is visible. Children can return outdoors if the storm has subsided and 10 minutes have passed since the last visible lightning strike.

### **Air Quality Safety:**

If the AQHI reaches 7 or higher, children will be provided with activities that reduce physical exertion while outside.

If the AQHI reaches 10 or higher, children will be kept indoors.

### **Cold Weather Safety:**

Children will be dressed appropriately with snow pants, snow jackets, toques, mittens, and boots. Teachers will use discretion with the duration of outdoor play based on the weather.

If the temperature exceeds -25C with the wind chill, children will be kept inside.

In the event of extreme weather warnings, staff will always adhere to the public safety guidelines.

## **Daily Schedule**

Below is the anticipated general flow of the day and will vary depending on daily circumstances and transition times.

The daily schedule at WWPS for our Infant Toddler room:

7:45 - 9:00 : Arrival / Open Explore  
9:00 - 9:15 : Morning Snack  
9:15 - 9:30 : Diapers/Clean Up  
9:30-9:45 : Morning Circle Time / Group Activity  
10:00 - 11:00 : Outdoor Explore  
11:15 - 12:00 : Lunch  
12:00 - 12:30 : Learning Experience  
12:30 - 1:00 : Nap Time Stories and Songs  
1:00 - 3:00 : Nap / Quiet Time  
3:00 - 3:15 : Afternoon Snack  
3:30 - 4:30 : Outdoor Explore  
4:30 - 4:45 : Pick up

The daily schedule at WWPS for our 3-5 room:

7:45 - 9:15 : Arrival / Open Explore  
9:15 - 9:25 : Circle Time / Group Activity  
9:25 - 10:00 : Morning snack  
10:15 - 11:45 : Outdoor Explore  
11:45 - 12:15 : Lunch  
12:15 - 12:30 : Movement / Yoga  
12:30 - 1:00 : Circle Time / Story Time  
1:00 - 2:15 : Nap / Quiet Time (If a child does not nap or has a capped nap time, they participate in a 25 minute quiet time then move to a station based activity time. (i.e. loose parts, arts/crafts, etc...))  
2:15 - 2:30 : Circle Time / Group Activity  
2:30 - 3:00 : Afternoon Snack  
3:15 - 4:30 : Outdoor Explore  
4:30 - 4:45 : Pick up

## **Arrival**

Children may begin arriving for the day from 7:45am. During arrival, staff will greet the child and parents, and welcome them into the space. Information about how the child slept the night before and their nap needs for the day will be noted. Any other specific information about the child's needs for that day will be recorded. Parent's will sign the attendance sheet, and note the time they arrived.

During this arrival period, children are welcome to explore any areas of the play space they wish. This open, child-led play helps children get settled in for the day in each of their own unique ways and styles.

Please try to ensure your child arrives by 9:00 am latest. This provides them with the opportunity to settle into the classroom before transitioning to group activities and minimizes disruption of our classroom programming.

## **aLate Arrival**

At WWPS, we request that children arrive by 9am. We understand that unexpected situations or appointments may arise, so please let us know ahead of time if your child will be late.

Consistent lateness can cause disruption to the group, so if your child is repeatedly arriving late, we may reach out to discuss any potential issues or concerns with you. Our goal is to ensure a smooth and positive experience for all children in our care.

## **Active Play**

At WWPS we believe in the importance of unstructured, active play. This is why we schedule at least 2-3 hours each day of outdoor active play. Our play area has a nature based focus with natural materials, which allows children an unlimited number of ways in which to use their imagination.

Unstructured play is shown to optimize creativity and learning, while outdoor active play promotes the development of gross and fine motor skills, and fosters physical literacy. Fundamental movements such as balance, coordination, and loco-motor skills (running, skipping, etc) are encouraged through free unstructured play. Active play is also encouraged indoors through daily movement routines (yoga, obstacles course, dance, etc..) and pretend play.

Injury prevention is an important component of our active play policy. At WWPS we apply foresight and planning to prevent injuries before they occur. This is done through selection of materials that reduce risk with proper positioning and anchoring of equipment. We also undergo play space inspections on a regular basis. Furthermore, we teach children how to be safe and aware of potential hazards through modelling of our own behaviours. At WWPS we encourage risky play, as it can help develop a child's self confidence, resilience, and even risk management, thereby reducing injuries.

## **Screen Use**

We prioritize hands-on, interactive, and play-based learning. Screen time is used sparingly and solely for educational purposes, as a tool to enhance learning experiences.

Screens may only be used by educators to show children brief, relevant educational content that supports current learning activities or themes. All content will be screened by staff prior to showing to ensure that the content is appropriate. Screen time is limited to a maximum of 5 minutes per day, maximum twice a week.

Screens are not used for entertainment, independent play, or as a substitute for active engagement and exploration.

By adhering to this policy, we ensure that screen time remains a purposeful and minimal part of our curriculum.

Staff are able to keep personal phones on their body during the duration of the day to ensure they are able to access Brightwheel to communicate with parents, and to use in case of emergencies. However, in order to ensure the focus remains on supervising and engaging with the children, using cell phones for personal use while with the children is prohibited.

At WWPS we have a zero screen time policy. We believe time is best spent socializing, playing, and exploring other activities.

## **Diapering/Toileting Policy**

Diapers will be checked at regular intervals, as well as changed as needed. Parents are responsible for providing diapers and wipes. WWPS staff will inform parents when stock is getting low. Staff will wear gloves or wash their hands after each change. The change table surface will also be disinfected after each change.

Cloth diapers are encouraged at WWPS. The following items must be supplied:

- 10 pre-stuffed cloth diapers
- 2 Wetbags
- Diaper cream that is okay to use on cloth diapers

PLEASE NOTE: Staff will NOT rinse or clean cloth diapers out. Because of this, the use of liners is mandatory.

WWPS encourages potty training whenever a child and their parents feel ready. Staff at WWPS will not initiate any potty training until it is started at the child's home and parents express their desire to continue potty training efforts at WWPS. Please bring at least three complete sets of clothes (including socks) and extra shoes during the first few days of potty training. Please dress your child in loose fitting bottoms to make it easier for them to learn how to undress themselves. Underwear is mandatory, even while potty training, to ensure any mess is contained if a child is to have a bm accident. Any soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag for you to launder at home. Children will wash their hands after each toilet/potty use.

## **Food and Drink**

Children require proper nourishment to optimize their physical and mental development. Parents are responsible for providing their children with their own snacks and lunch. Each classroom has its own fridge, where children's lunches will be stored.

At WWPS we encourage parents to follow [Canada's Food Guide](#) and send their children with healthy nourishing food. A stock of healthy, non-perishable food items will be kept at WWPS, should some children occasionally arrive without anything adequate to eat.

At WWPS we have a tree nut and peanut free policy. If your child needs an EpiPen, it will be kept on site in a secure cupboard in case of an emergency allergic reaction. All staff will be trained in their use. When off-site, epiPens will be brought in an emergency first-aid kit.

Safe drinking water will be available to children at all times to ensure they remain properly hydrated. The drinking water is municipally sourced from the City of Fernie. The municipality ensures the safety of its water and conducts routine tests to monitor for turbidity. In the event of a municipal water advisory, bottled water will be brought in and used.

For any infants that drink from a bottle, WWPS staff will administer the bottle by hand and never prop it. Breastmilk or formula must be labelled with the child's name and date. All breastmilk and formula will be stored and prepared as instructed (i.e. refrigerated and/or warmed).

At all snack and meal times, WWPS staff will ensure that children wash their hands, that they are always supervised when eating, and that all food is cut into appropriate sizes. When it comes to meal times at WWPS, we align with the concepts of division of responsibility. This means that children are responsible for what food is eaten, how much food is eaten, and whether they eat anything at all. WWPS is only responsible for deciding when and where the children eat, while the parents are responsible for what the children eat. By no means will WWPS force or coerce children to eat their food.

Children will eat together at a dining set that is appropriate for their size and age. Eating together at the table encourages positive relationships with food and discussion amongst children. Staff will encourage conversation around where our food comes from. Gardening activities in the outdoor play area (Fernie Family Garden) can help children understand the importance of healthy nourishing food.

### **Shared Food at Birthdays and Holidays**

Food sharing is not permitted, even at birthdays or holidays. This is in order to ensure the health and safety of all children at WWPS due to food allergies. Staff will explore other ways for children to celebrate their birthdays and holidays.

## **Outdoor Time**

WWPS has partnered with the Fernie Family Garden, a public community garden directly behind our centre, as a main outdoor playspace. We will continue to develop parts of the garden as a nature playspace for all Fernie families to access.

Children will access our outdoor play area by walking. Any non-walking infants will be carried in arms and/or in a backpack carrier, or if needed, a stroller will be used.

- Staff will ensure that sufficient water and any seasonal gear children should require (extra gloves, hand/foot warmers, sunscreen, etc...) will be brought along.
- Staff will bring with them a first aid kit, emergency contact information for each child, a staff cell-phone, and extra supplies, including but not limited to, extra water, extra sunscreen, diaper changing kit, etc.

## **Pick up**

Parents or authorized persons will arrive to pick up each child and complete the sign-out sheet. Pick up will generally occur outdoors in the garden area, except on Fridays. A verbal report of the child's day will be provided to each parent or authorized person. In the event of a late pick-up, WWPS staff will follow the Safe Release of Children policy and a late fee will be charged and the parent will sign a form with the amount due. Fees need to be paid within 48 hours, after which the child cannot return to care until they are paid. Fees will go directly to the staff who had to stay longer. See Late Fees section for details. If you know you are going to be late due to extenuating circumstance please notify the staff through a phone call or Brightwheel

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE WITHOUT THE STAFF'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT at drop-off and pick up times to ensure your child has been signed out.

If you require a longer conversation with staff regarding your child, please arrange a separate time for a meeting to ensure as the educators need to continue their supervision and care of all remaining children and are able to finish their shift on schedule.



## **Safe Release of Children**

Only authorized persons will be able to pick up children at WWPS. To be an authorized person, the parent or guardian must fill out and sign the Authorization Persons form, indicating the person's name, relationship to the child, and contact information. WWPS staff will confirm identification, by asking for photo id from the authorized person.

If a non-authorized person attempts to pick up a child, the child will not be released, until there is written consent from the parent and the person's identification is confirmed with photo id

If any authorized person picking up a child appears to be unable to provide safe care (ex: appears intoxicated), WWPS staff will try to find an alternative option to get home (i.e. call another authorized person, walk home, taxi) . If the authorized person picking up the child refuses, WWPS staff will call the RCMP. This policy will be followed for all authorized persons, however; children will always be released to their own parent or lawful guardian. If a parent appears unable to provide safe and proper care, staff will inform the police after the child has been released.

## **Authorized Persons/Emergency Contacts**

Upon enrolment, parents are required to complete the emergency contact / authorized person(s) section of the form. This identifies emergency contacts and other authorized person(s) that staff can contact if needed.

## **Early Pick-up**

At Wild Wapiti Playschool, the wellbeing and safety of all children is our top priority. There may be situations where it is necessary for us to remove a child from our program for the day and a parent will be contacted to pick the child up as soon as possible. If a child is sent home for behavioural reasons the staff will work with the parents to develop a plan to support the child's continued participation in the program.

These situations include:

- If a child is showing symptoms of illness (please refer to our Sickness Policy).
- If a child's behavior persistently puts themselves or others in danger.
- If a child refuses to accompany the class to or from outings, such as

outdoor play or field trips.

- If a child becomes a flight risk or needs physical restraint to keep themselves or others safe.
- If a child does not have or refuses to wear weather appropriate clothing to sustain our regular programming of 2+ hours of outdoor play.
- If a child is experiencing extreme emotional distress and is crying uncontrollably or screaming, and cannot be consoled despite our best efforts.
- If a child is lethargic and not participating in class activities for an extended period, as determined by our staff's assessment of the child's wellbeing.
- In the case of power outages or other emergency situations.
- If a child has sustained an injury that requires medical attention, but not an ambulance.

## Sickness

### When to stay home

There are three important issues in determining when a child is too ill to attend a WWPS.

1. Protecting other children from communicable disease
2. Ensuring the comfort and safety of the child who is ill, and
3. The capacity of the program to care for a sick child (we cannot spare one staff to care for one child)

WWPS asks that you keep your child at home if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (38C or 100.4F)
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Diarrhea
- New symptoms of runny nose/sore throat/coughing
- Persistent cough
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Irritable and Lethargic
- Bright Green/Yellow constant mucus
- Earache
- Persistent runny nose that requires adult assistance to wipe every 15 minutes or less.

Please do not bring your child to the childcare with any illness where your child is unable to participate in regular daily activities even if they have none of the above symptoms. If you need to give your child “over-the-counter” medication, that is an indication that they are probably not healthy enough to participate.

If your child has been sent home ill during the day it is expected that they will stay home the following day to fully recover. If your child has been sent home due to vomiting or diarrhea it is expected that they will stay at home for 48 hours after the last episode. This is done to prevent other children and staff from getting sick.

If your child becomes ill while at WWPS, our staff will contact the parent/guardian (or the alternate authorized person on file) to come pick the child up. WWPS will isolate the child and make them as comfortable as possible, but will not administer medication.

### **Communicable diseases**

Communicable diseases must be reported to WWPS immediately, these include but are not limited to:

- Food Borne Illness (All Causes, Eg. Salmonella)
- Diphtheria
- Giardiasis
- Hepatitis A, B And C
- Measles
- German Measles (Rubella)
- Bacterial Or Viral Meningitis
- Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome
- Meningococcal Disease (Bacteraemia Or Meningitis)
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Tuberculosis
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Need To Be Reported Due To Abuse Issues)
- Waterborne Illness (All Causes)

### **Medical Conditions**

If your child has a medical condition or diagnosis that requires specific care, we will develop a care plan, in conjunction with you, the parents and any person that you request. This care plan will be kept in your child’s record.

#### **Allergies, Epi-Pen And Asthma Inhalers**

- If your child has ANY allergies and requires an Epi-pen or needs an asthma inhaler, it is mandatory that you notify our staff immediately
- A separate medication authorization form must be completed. If an Epi-pen or asthma inhaler needs to be kept at school, a permission form

must be completed before your child starts playschool. Epi-pens and inhalers must have a current expiry date.

### **Medication Administration Policy**

WWPS will only administer prescription medications to children only if there is written consent from parents. All medication must be provided in its original packaging with the prescription label. If detailed instructions are not indicated on the prescription label, instructions must be provided on the administration of medication form. Record of the date/time, medication type, dosage, and person administering it will be noted. All medications will be kept in a secure location away from children..

### **Medical Services Consent**

All parents are required to complete the Medical Services Consent section of the enrolment forms. This provides WWPS with written consent from parents and/or guardians to call a medical practitioner or ambulance in the case of a medical emergency.

### **Injuries**

WWPS cannot assume responsibility for your child beyond that which would be expected of a reasonable parent. Accidents during daily activities are sometimes unavoidable.

Immediate attention is paid to children for minor cuts and bruises, and parents are notified at pick-up time. Our staff is trained in both First-Aid and CPR.

Accidents and illnesses that require medical attention will be reported to parents immediately. Parents are required to pick up children and get the appropriate treatment.

In the event of a serious emergency, WWPS will contact 911 who will transport the child to the nearest hospital. Parents are informed and are required to join the child at the hospital.

### **Immunizations**

At WWPS, we encourage you to keep your child's immunizations up to date to keep the WWPS community safe and limit sickness. Staff will keep a record of vaccination status for each child on file.

# Emergency Plan

In the case of an emergency, WWPS staff will enact the emergency procedure outlined in the following policy:

If an evacuation of the building is necessary (fire drill / evacuation procedure):

There will be an onsite emergency muster point directly outside the entrance of the building.

There is also an offsite emergency muster point, which is the Fernie Courthouse, directly across 5th street. This location is walkable from the childcare facility, even in winter weather conditions, and has a large hallway entrance where we can gather.

Emergency exits, as well as fire alarms, and smoke detectors are clearly marked in the facility.

Non-walking children will be evacuated by the use of carriers and in arms, and able toddlers and preschoolers will be evacuated by walking.

Children will immediately form a line at the door.

Educators will ensure all children are in attendance, and then proceed to lead the children out of the building.

Educators will bring the emergency backpack, described further below.

Educators will lead the children to the off-site muster point, and proceed to contact parents or emergency contacts.

An emergency backpack (including, but not limited to, first aid supplies, blankets, toys/books, snacks/water, any pertinent medications, diapering supplies, and emergency contact information for each child) will always be kept next to the main emergency exit.

Once all children are safely evacuated, 911 will be called and parents will be notified by the use of a WWPS staff cell phone.

If, for any reason, we are required to remain inside the facility during an emergency:

WWPS will continue to provide the same care as we normally would to provide a sense of calm for the children. Daily routines will be altered in order to remain inside for the required duration.

Parents will be notified, by cell phone, that their child is safe as soon as the immediate threat has passed.

Emergency contact information for each child will be kept next to the posted Emergency Plan in the facility.

In the case of a power outage:

WWPS staff will continue to provide the same care to the children as they normally would to help children stay calm and avoid panic.

If the power outage is still ongoing after 2 hours, parents will be notified to come pick up their child and WWPS will close for the day. Parents or authorized persons will have a 2-hour window to come pick up their child. After 2 hours child services will be contacted.

In the case of a medical emergency for a child or staff:

Step 1. Remain calm

Step 2. Call 911 to communicate the emergency

Do not move the child/staff unless necessary

Call for a First Aid certified staff member to provide the necessary help until the medical professionals arrive

Emergency contacts will be notified of the incident as soon as the child/staff in under professional medical assistance

In the case of an unsafe person/intruder in the facility:

Staff will immediately close and lock the doors to their classrooms

Call 911 to communicate the emergency

Close curtains and blinds and lead children away from the windows

Turn off all lights and audio equipment

Staff will remain calm and encourage children to stay as quiet as possible

Wait until help arrives

Parents will be notified that their child is safe as soon as the immediate threat has passed

All WWPS staff will be up to date with their first aid training and will be knowledgeable and practised in the facilities emergency plan and procedures. Staff will hold regular safety meetings where they will review the emergency plans and procedures. Fire drills will be practised once a month, and emergency plans at least once each year.

After any emergency, there will be individual communication with parents to ensure all their concerns are addressed. WWPS staff will have a full internal safety debrief, and any improvements to the emergency policies and procedures will be undertaken. The facility will undergo a physical inspection to verify that all spaces are safe for children to return to care.

## **Behaviour and supervision**

### **Behaviour Guidance Policy**

At WWPS, we strongly believe in an inclusive approach to behavior guidance. We recognize that every child is unique and may require different strategies to support their behavior. We strive to provide an environment that respects and celebrates diversity, including cultural and developmental differences. Our educators are trained to understand and appreciate the various backgrounds and experiences of each child in our care.

We prioritize prevention through clear, consistent, and appropriate limits, phrased in positive ways to demonstrate appropriate behavior. We also focus on positive reinforcement, modeling positive behavior, and child-led learning and problem solving.

Intervention, if necessary, is positive and supportive, acknowledging and validating the child's feelings and restating limits. We use natural and logical consequences and approach challenging behavior with empathy and understanding.

At WWPS, we never use bribery, threats, or punishment, including corporal punishment or deprivation of basic needs, and we commit to avoiding all negative behavior guidance techniques. Our policy is designed to promote positive behavior, build self-esteem and confidence, and help children develop the skills they need to succeed in life.

## Care and Supervision Policies

At WWPS, we take the safety and wellbeing of your child seriously. Here are some ways we ensure your child is supervised and safe at all times:

- We keep every area in sight at all times, including indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Our staff actively engages with your child to support their learning and safety.
- We have two bathrooms available, one near the IT classroom and the other down the hall from the 3-5-year-old classroom. Bathroom breaks will be scheduled into the daily routine. This allows for the whole group to remain together and travel to the bathroom together. Bathroom breaks will occur before and after outdoor time, snack/meal times, and nap times. There will also be an additional staff present for most hours of the day to assist with any unscheduled bathroom needs.
- During nap/quiet times, napping children will always be accompanied by a staff member in the nap room. Any non-napping children will be accompanied by the other educators in the classroom.
- During transportation, adequate educator to child ratios will be maintained and additional support will be provided if available. Educators will ensure a safe route is taken, especially during winter conditions, and field trip pinnies will be used when travelling further than the garden.
- During outdoor time, WWPS staff will supervise all children during outdoor time in the Fernie Family Garden by:
  - Carrying out a walk-through of the garden to ensure there are no hazards, prior to allowing children entry.
  - Regularly inspect play equipment to ensure they meet all safety standards
  - Regularly taking a head count of all children
  - Frequently scanning the garden area for any hazards or strangers
  - At least one staff will always remain near the Garden entry/exit to ensure no children leave
  - Communicating with each other, and always staying informed with each other about the safety of each child
  - Strictly prohibiting use of their personal devices for personal use.

The Childcare Policy on Parent/Guardian Reporting of Incidents outlines the procedures for parents and guardians to report any incidents or concerns related to their child's care and well-being. This policy aims to ensure clear communication,



prompt action, and transparency, prioritizing the safety and welfare of children in the childcare setting. Parents and guardians are encouraged to report any incidents that may affect their child's safety, health, or emotional well-being, including injuries or accidents requiring medical attention, health emergencies, behavioral concerns, abuse or neglect, or unsafe practices within the childcare setting. It is important that these reports are made as soon as possible, either verbally or in writing, to the childcare provider, with as much detail as possible, including the nature of the concern, the actions taken, and the time and date of the incident. This helps ensure a thorough and accurate understanding of the situation.

For less urgent concerns, parents may choose to submit a written report, either through the facility's designated incident report form, via email, or in writing. Upon receiving a report, the childcare provider will acknowledge the concern promptly, review the incident, and take any necessary immediate actions. If the situation requires further investigation, such as cases involving suspected abuse or neglect, the provider will follow the appropriate protocols, which may include notifying authorities and conducting a thorough investigation. Parents will be kept informed of the outcomes and any actions taken, and follow-up meetings may be scheduled if needed.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process, with information shared only with those who need to be involved in addressing the concern, in accordance with privacy laws. If parents feel that their concern has not been adequately addressed, they are encouraged to escalate the matter to relevant authorities, such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or local law enforcement, and will be provided with contact information for these resources. The childcare provider is committed to supporting parents throughout the reporting process, ensuring that concerns are treated with respect, acted upon promptly, and handled with care. By fostering an open, transparent, and responsive environment, this policy aligns with the British Columbia Code of Ethics in Early Years, ensuring a safe, respectful, and supportive setting for all children

In the event that an incident needs to be internally investigated, WWPS will place the member of staff on paid leave while investigation is underway. Statements will be collected and as much information around the occurrence will be gathered. The case will be reviewed, and follow up actions will be decided on a case to case basis.

## **Maintaining a Positive and Respectful Environment**

At WWPS, we believe in fostering positive interactions between parents and our staff. We expect all parents and authorized persons to treat our staff, children, volunteers, and Board of Directors with respect and consideration.

We take inappropriate behavior seriously and have a zero-tolerance policy towards any of the following behaviors:

- Shouting, swearing or being disrespectful towards staff
- Using abusive or aggressive tones, including intimidation and threats
- Publishing inappropriate content related to WWPS staff, children, or Board of Directors on social media
- Engaging in any form of physical abuse or intimidation tactics

If a parent or authorized person is found to be engaging in any of the above behavior, we may terminate childcare services for their child.

We understand that parents may have issues or concerns from time to time. If you encounter any problems, we ask that you please follow these steps:

- Contact the Manager directly during business hours via email or phone.
- If the issue cannot be resolved, you may request a meeting with the educator(s) and the Manager or a Board Member present.

Please remember, it is inappropriate to contact staff on their personal phones outside of business hours. We appreciate your cooperation in creating a positive and respectful environment for everyone at WWPS.

## **Confidentiality**

At WWPS, we value the privacy and trust of every child and family in our care. Our staff understands the importance of confidentiality and always strives to maintain a professional and respectful relationship with each child and their family. We believe that sharing information is essential to promoting a child's well-being, and we only do so when it is necessary.

The safety, health, and well-being of every child in our care are our top priorities, and we take them seriously. We will always do everything in our power to protect each child's safety, even if it means breaking confidentiality. However, we will only share information with the proper authorities to ensure a child's well-being.

## **Visitors**

Any person who will be participating in activities within the classroom will require a current Criminal Record Check. All other visitors must report directly to the manager or acting manager.

## **No Smoking/Vaping, Drugs and Alcohol Policy**

There is no smoking/vaping, drugs (including marijuana) or alcohol allowed on the grounds, including the parking lot, playground and within the premises of WWPS. This is to advise staff, volunteers, and parents that handling those substances around the facility and playground is prohibited, whether or not children are present. Signs are posted as a reminder.

## **Parking**

Street parking is available on all streets surrounding the Fernie Family Centre. There is also a parking lot next to the Fernie Family Garden behind the building which can be utilized during pick-up. Please be aware that the parking areas will be busy with parents bringing and picking up children from WWPS as well as the other preschool and drop-in kids programs that operate in the building. Please be mindful of others and vigilant about safety when parking and leaving these areas.

## **Media Release**

Parents can decide and indicate through the media release form whether they are comfortable with the staff taking photos/videos of their child/children and whether the photos/videos can be shared via text or email to families, used on brightwheel: our parent communication app, and/or publicly for promotional purposes on social media and/or website. Parents can decide whether the photos can be shared only directly with parents or not at all. Staff diligently follow the wishes of the parents when taking and sharing photos or videos.