



# Vancouver Society of Children's Centres

## School Age Programs Family Handbook

### Welcome to VSOC

#### Administration Office

200—1362 Seymour Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3P3

Tel: (604) 718-6555 Fax: (604) 718-6565 Email: [info@vsocc.org](mailto:info@vsocc.org) Website: [www.vsocc.org](http://www.vsocc.org)

**Elsie Roy Elementary School**  
**School Age Programs**  
180 Drake Street

**Crosstown Elementary**  
**School Age Programs**  
55 Expo Boulevard

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## INTRODUCTION TO VSOCC

We look forward to working with you and your family. This handbook provides information about our program. We review this handbook with families during the program orientation meeting. Please feel free to ask any questions or for more information.

### Our History

The Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC) has been serving families with young children since 1995. In partnership with many others, we have created a vibrant community for families in Vancouver. Today, VSOCC is the largest single-purpose organization providing non-profit childcare in British Columbia.

### VSOCC's Vision, Mission & Values

Vision: Empowering all children and families to reach their full potential.

Mission: We develop and deliver excellent quality, inclusive childcare services in collaboration with government, community and business partners.

Values: Life-long Learning  
Diversity and Inclusion Employee Well-being Strong Partnerships

### Membership

As a Society, VSOCC is governed by the British Columbia Society's Act and a VSOCC membership is required for enrolment and participation in all VSOCC programs. All members of VSOCC may participate and vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

All member families must respect our values and principles and adhere to our policies.

### Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is elected by and responsible to the members of the Society. The VSOCC Board is made up of parent and community members and at least 50% must be parent directors. The current list of Board members is posted on our website at [www.vsocc.org](http://www.vsocc.org).



**PLEASE NOTE:** As per the VSOCC Child Care Parent Agreement, the Society reserves the right to change or amend its operating policies and procedures, and program fees at any time. As much notice as possible will be provided.

## VSOCC PHILOSOPHY & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At VSOCC, commitment to quality and excellence in our work with children and families is a core value. We strive to create programs where children, educators, families, ideas and materials come together to create an inspiring, joyful and creative environment and community.

The following principles guide our decisions and are central to creating quality experiences and environments for children:

- Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential;
- Families have the most important role in contributing to children's well-being and learning;
- Educators are researchers and collaborators;
- People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community and place;
- Child care programs and environments are inclusive;
- Play is integral to well-being and learning;
- Relationships are the context for well-being and learning; and
- Learning is holistic<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a connectedness between a child's physical, personal, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being as well as the cognitive aspects of learning.

We support actions outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the principles of the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

VSOCC believes that quality is measured by the interconnected relationship between the Program Environment, Emergent Curriculum, Role of the Educator, and Family and Community Engagement. Each of these focus areas work together to create environments that deliver quality programs and help children and families thrive.

## OUR EMPLOYEES

Our employees are a diverse with a variety of cultural backgrounds, work experiences and languages. All VSOCC school age educators are trained and certified in first aid and food safety, and have completed a criminal record check. Our educators are often in the process of training for careers in Education, Social Work, and Recreation.

### SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM TEAM

#### Program Manager

- Manage the Program Supervisors of the licensed school age programs, and provide leadership in quality program delivery
- Ensures mandate, policies, and procedures are consistently maintained
- Oversees compliance with regulatory bodies, legal, budgetary and other requirements in their programs
- Works closely with the VSB personnel; and
- Is a member of the Management Team, reports to the Director of Operations

#### Program Supervisor

- Manage the day-to-day operations; oversee the program; supervise and lead the Educator team; and communicate with families
- Reports to the Program Manager
- Has experience and training in school age care, education or recreation

#### School Age Educators

- Care for, guide and supervise children; plan and implement activities;
- Provides families with updates and information about their child;
- Has a minimum of 20 hours of training on health, safety, guidance and licensed childcare. May have additional training in school age care, education, recreation or related fields; and
- Additional temporary educators work during the summer months to provide full day service.

#### Casual Educators

- Supports our team with supervision and care of children; and
- Have an minimum of 20 hours of training on health, safety, guidance and licensed childcare.

## OUR SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

Our childcare programs are licensed by the Ministry of Health: Community Care Licensing, operate under the Provincial Child Care Licensing Regulations, and health and safety protocols meet requirements set out by the Vancouver Coastal Health.

### THE PROGRAM DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

#### After School

The school year starts from the day after Labour Day in September to the last day of school in June.

Our program operates after school from 3pm to 6pm, and starts with a snack and a group time to talk about the activities offered for the day. When the elementary school schedules an early dismissal day for parent-teacher meeting or other events, the program will provide care starting at the early dismissal time. The program offers a choice of open exploration activities, small group activities, group gatherings, outdoor/ active play activities and recreational / leisure activities.

#### Full Day Program for School Closures (Pro D Days & Winter & Spring Breaks)

During school closures, the program operates from 8:00am to 6:00pm. On these days, the program delves deeply into the special interests of the group, and has opportunities to create and implement bigger, more complex projects. In addition, workshops or fieldtrips are designed to enhance children's experiences.

A list of early dismissals and school closures is posted on the VSOCC website (<https://vsocc.org/childcare-programs/>).

### THE PROGRAM DURING SUMMER

The summer program operates from July 1 to Labour Day from 8:00am to 6:00pm for children enrolled in the 12-month school age program. The summer program is a comprehensive, fun and exciting summer of exploration of special interests and weekly workshops and fieldtrips.

### PROGRAM CLOSURES

Our programs are closed for all statutory holidays; between Christmas and New Year Day; and for up to 5 VSOCC Professional Days. A list of the current school year and summer closures are posted on the VSOCC website (<https://vsocc.org/childcare-programs/>)

#### Unscheduled Closures

Programs will be declared closed if:

- The centre is unsafe (i.e. loss of electricity or water);
- The Government, Translink and/or other authorities declare an extreme weather alert or advise the public to avoid unnecessary travel; and / or
- The Vancouver School Board closes schools due to extreme weather conditions.

If closing/closed, educators will:

- Email families announcing that the centre is closed; and
- Contact families requesting that children be picked up immediately. If the educator cannot reach the parent/guardian, they will contact the emergency contact person.

In the event of a severe weather closure, we will make every effort to advise families before 7:00am on the day of closure. Closures are posted on the VSOCC website.

# GETTING READY FOR YOUR CHILD'S 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY

## ORIENTATION MEETING BEFORE YOUR CHILD'S START

The Program Supervisor will arrange to meet with you to learn about your child's interests, experiences, needs, and preferences; and to learn about your family, your priorities and your interests. The supervisor will give you a tour of our program; tell you about our program's schedule, routines, and important procedures; and plan your child's start schedule with you

Share any vital information to help us better care for your child, and help ease their transition to our program, including any food restrictions, allergies, diagnosis or custody related details.

## ITEMS REQUIRED BEFORE YOUR CHILD CAN START ATTENDING

### 1. Completed registration forms – Please bring this package to the orientation meeting:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Parent Agreement  | <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Immunization Information             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Membership  | <input type="checkbox"/> Allergy/Asthma Exposure History (if relevant) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized Pick-Up Person & Emergency Contacts   | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Consent Card (2 copies)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four 4"x 6" Photographs of your child, recent head shot for emergency use and display/identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Child and Family Profile sheet                |

### 2. Emergency Comfort Kit – Please bring this kit before or on the day your child is starting:

VSOCC has additional emergency supplies for all children and educators onsite including food and drinking water; however, each child must have a comfort kit from their family to help comfort them in the event of an emergency until their family is able to arrive.

In a large plastic zip lock bag labelled with your child's name, prepare the following items:

- ☐ Family photo (including pets / friends)
- ☐ A note with some words of encouragement for your child
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers for out of town friends/family
- ☐ A special, small, comfort toy

Each child must have a completed earthquake kit at the centre before they can attend.

## ITEMS TO BRING EVERYDAY TO SCHOOL AGE

We suggest your child use a backpack to keep their personal belongings safe while attending our program. Clearly label all personal belongings with your child's name. Educators will encourage children to keep track and to put their personal belonging away in their backpacks.

Children should have clothing available to spend time outdoors every day, in rain, snow or sunshine. Our programs go outside at least one to two times each day.

### • For cold wet days, children should have:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket with hood, or warm winter coat | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof pants are helpful on snowy days or when going on trips where children are likely to get cold or wet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof, warm boots                     |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm hat and gloves/mittens                |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A change of dry clothes                    |   |

### • For hot or sunny days, children should have:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor shoes or sandals are secure on your child's feet. For safety, NO flip flops. | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun hat & sunglasses   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen lotion / cream. Please do NOT send your child with sprays, as they create very slippery floors. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight, long sleeve shirt or sun shirt  |  |

## WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL AGE

Our programs are very well equipped with toys. Keep your child/family's toys and electronic devices, including smart phone, gaming devices or tablets at home as they may be lost, broken or difficult to share. Lost or damaged toys and devices are not the responsibility of VSOCC nor VSOCC staff.

## GRADUAL ENTRY TO SCHOOL AGE

Starting in a new childcare program can be an emotional experience for your child at any age. We suggest that your child start with a shorter first day to give them the opportunity to become familiar with their educators, their new peer group, and the program routines and expectations, and to provide your child with a smooth transition.

We suggest families of Kindergarten children pick up their child earlier (ie. around 3pm) during the first week of school, as children are in the process of learning multiple new routines and may often feel overwhelmed, challenged and tired.

### **Kindergarten – A gradual start to the School Year**

Our pick up from Kindergarten is coordinated during the first two weeks after Labour Day with the Elementary School's Kindergarten Gradual Entry schedule. Please drop off your child directly at their Kindergarten classroom at their scheduled start time. Our Educator will pick up Kindergarten children from their classroom when dismissed, and then sign them into the school age program and walk them to the program room.

### **Grades 1-5 – Gradual start based on child's needs**

Gradual entry of a child in Grades 1-5 will take into consideration of the needs and ability of the child, as well as their previous experience in the school environment and child care programs.

The first day should be 1 – 2 hours for the child to meet the educators and to learn about the routines and expectations of the program. If the child does well, they may be ready to start attending without any further graduated start.

If **a parent or the Program Supervisor feels the child requires more time to adjust**, the gradual start may be extended. The Program Supervisor will work with the family to determine an appropriate gradual routine to help the child adjust to their new program.

## ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### **ATTENDANCE**



**Given the significant demand for childcare spaces, VSOCC requires regular attendance for all spaces. If a child is not attending on a regular basis, VSOCC may end service and provide the space to another family.**

**If your child is going to be late or away**, please contact the centre by 9:00am and let us know. If your child is away due to illness, please also share the type and/or symptoms of the illness.

Arrival and departure transitions can be extremely busy times. Educators are particularly alert to supervision and safety for children to ensure the transfer of supervision and care for each child is very clear and meets Child Care Licensing Requirements. They may not be able have in depth or long conversations with families during these times.



**Responsibility for your child resides with you when you are on-site.** Please supervise and assist your child when you are on-site.

### **ARRIVING AFTER SCHOOL**

**Kindergarten children** are picked up from their classroom by the Educator. **Children in Grades 1 and higher** are expected to arrive on their own at the program room. Educators will monitor children's arrivals and sign them in.

**A child considered MISSING** if they not arrived in our program by 3:15pm and notification of absence has not been received from their parent. The Educator will check with the child's teacher and principal to see if the child has been delayed, and call the parent or guardian to check if they have been picked up or is

absent from school. If the Educator is unable to locate the child, the Educator will report the missing child to the Vancouver Police Department.

### **ARRIVING on a Pro D or School Break Day.**

1. **Tell an educator** when you and your child arrive at the program;
2. **Share** relevant details about your child and give any special instructions (i.e. child did not sleep well, change of pick up person, changes to typical family situations etc.); and
3. **Sign-in** your child as you are leaving.

**On fieldtrips days** please arrive by 9:30am. Programs leave for their trips by 10am.

If your child is having difficulty at drop-off, please speak to an educator about how we can help you and your child during the transition.

### **PICK UP & DEPARTURES**

Your child will only be released to a custodial parent, guardian, or person over the age of 16 years authorized by custodial parent or guardian.

1. **Sign-out** your child as you arrive to pick up; and
2. **Tell an educator** when you and your child leave the program.

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before 6pm, if arriving at the very end of the day. Educators may need to provide you /or your pick up person details about your child's day.

#### **Pre-Authorized Pick-Up Persons**

The emergency pick-up person or authorized pick up person listed on your child's registration form may pick up your child with no notification. Educators will ask to see their government issued photo identification to verify before releasing your child.

#### **Authorizing an Alternative Pick-Up Person**

We understand unplanned situations happen. If you need to send someone not on the pre-authorized pick-up list, contact the program to give authorization and provide the person's full name. Please inform your pick up person to bring government issued photo identification. Our educators will be checking their photo identification upon arrival.

#### **Unauthorized Pick-up Person**

If a person arrives and do not have authorization to pick up your child, the educators will not allow the person to enter the centre nor to pick up your child..

#### **Impaired Pick-up Person**

If educators suspect the pick-up person to be impaired (i.e. drugs or alcohol), they will not release the child.

The educators will offer to call the alternate parent or guardian; and / or offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the parent and child. If these offers are refused, the educator will notify the police. **Educators must support the law.**

### **LATE PICK UP & LATE FEES**

**If you are going to be late to pick up, please call our program and let us when to expect you.**

#### **Child Not Picked Up by Closing**

If we have not heard from you by 6:00 pm, an educator will phone your home, cellular phone and place of employment and the alternate person(s) on your registration form, to attempt to arrange for pick up for your child.

#### **Bikes/Scooters:**

The school age programs do NOT have dedicated bike / scooter storage areas within the centre or within the school. The Vancouver School Board and the City of Vancouver have public bike racks available outside of the school. Park and lock at your own risk.

VSOCC is not responsible for loss or damage to bikes, scooter or items left on bikes or scooter on VSOCC or VSB property.



If your child has not been picked up by an authorized pick up person and no alternate arrangements has been made, then at 6:30pm, the Educator will contact the **Ministry for Children and Family Development** to arrange for a Social Worker to pick up your child.

If you are late and your child is no longer at the centre, please contact the Ministry for Children and Family Development to locate your child: **1-800-663-9122**

**Late Pick-up Fee:** \$1 per late minute from closing time to when the family *leaves* the program.

Late fees are due at time of late pick-up and processed by signature on the 'Late Pick-Up Form' provided by the educator on duty.

**Repeated Late Pick-up:**

Repeated incidents of late pick-up violates the conditions of the Parent Agreement and childcare services may be withdrawn.

## CUSTODY AGREEMENTS, COURT ORDERS & DISPUTES

If there is legal documentation specifying custody, guardianship or limited access for your child, a copy of the signed legal documentation (i.e. current custody agreement or court order) must be provided to the program.

Educators will follow the written custody agreement and court orders at all times.

Educators are not permitted to become involved in custody disputes and will not provide documentation to be used for either party. Educators will appear at custody proceedings only when issued a court subpoena.

## COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Educators will welcome and speak with you at arrivals and departure times. Please feel free to talk and share with the program supervisor or educators at drop-off or pick up times, or by phone call or email. Tell us about your child's day, night or weekend; changes in their health, behaviour or routine (ex. moving homes, parent illness or extended absence); and any other details to help us care for your child. Our goal is to maintain open and respectful communication with you and your family.

### Newsletters and Email Notifications

VSOCC sends monthly newsletters and email updates to the email address you provided when enrolling your child. These emails contain important program information, including schedules of fieldtrips, walks and special events, snack menu, staff updates and other changes. At times, the educators may share special moments and play experiences of the group and program activities through the email updates. **Check to ensure you receive emails from all VSOCC email addresses.**

### Program Documentation and Displays

Our educators and the children posts photographs and stories in the program room for everyone to enjoy. We encourage you to take a moment to view and learn about the children's experiences in their School Age program through these written and visual documentations.

### Family – Educator Meetings

We will primarily focus on the supervision and care of children at arrival and departure times. Our educators may not be able to hold a private or in depth conversation at these moments. If you have questions, concerns or would just like more time to meet with our educators, please feel free to request a meeting through the Program Supervisor.

### What if I have a concern?

If a concern arises between you and an individual educator, please to try to discuss the concern with the educator to attempt to reach a mutual resolution. If not resolved, speak with the Program Supervisor, and then the Program Manager, if needed.

**If you are concerned about the program**, speak with the Program Supervisor, and if not resolved, contact the Program Manager or Director. Where appropriate, the CEO may be involved.

**If you have a concern about a policy or Board decision**, please contact the Program Director or CEO to discuss the issue.

We are committed to working cooperatively with you if you have any concerns. **However, if you are not satisfied with the results** and you decide to withdraw your child from the program, the 45-day Withdrawal Policy is applicable.

## SUPERVISION & GUIDANCE

Educators supervise children at all times and adhere to educator-to-child ratios as outlined in the BC Child Care Licensing Regulations:

- For school age programs with Kindergarten and Grade 1 children, 1 educator to 12 children ratio.
- For school age programs with only children in Grades 2 and higher, 1 educator to 15 children ratio.

### VSOCC's Approach to Guidance

VSOCC's guidance strategies include prevention and intervention strategies. We take a proactive and positive approach to guide children's behaviour, and base our prevention and intervention strategies on current research and understanding of child development. **We do not use punishment or rewards to guide children.**

The children in school age programs are at various stages of learning social-emotional and coping skills. They are also learning to play, to disagree and to resolve mistakes with their peers. Children may lose control of their emotions, become over excited or angry or have disagreements with their peers, and at times, exhibit disrespectful, unsafe, harmful or challenging behavior; especially after school when they are tired from a long day in school. We use these moments as learning opportunities for all children.

Our goal is to:

- Ensure maximum safety, well-being and respect of children;
- Promote children's development of impulse control, confidence, personal responsibility and natural consequences of their actions when appropriate; and
- Provide a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice critical skills related to social and emotional growth including the ability to get along with others, solve problems and resolve conflicts; to be compassionate, kind and express emotions in healthy and appropriate ways; to remain calm, make decisions and think before acting; and to take appropriate and reasonable risks in a safe and supportive environment

We create a positive climate and minimize challenging behaviours by using proactive, prevention strategies and techniques. We engage and interact with children to build positive relationships; set clear limits and apply limits in a consistent manner; establish appropriate routines, groupings and environments; offer appropriate choices; reinforce positive behaviour; model appropriate behaviour; allow time for children to respond to expectations and transitions; and ignore minor inappropriate behaviour

Educators intervene to de-escalate the situation and help children regain self-control and resolve the problem. We encourage respect for individual differences, abilities and experiences; provide experiences with natural and logical consequences; redirect and offer substitutions; and model and encourage the child's active participation in problem solving.

In the event there is a pattern of ongoing challenging behaviour, the Program Supervisor will arrange time with the parent/guardian to discuss the observed challenges and the strategies, supports, and resources to assist the child.

## INCLUSION & EXTRA SUPPORT NEEDS

VSOCC works in partnership with families, respecting the diverse backgrounds that enrich our programs, and recognizing that all families have different needs, interests, and expectations. We work closely with a variety of support services to ensure a supportive and experience in our programs.

If your child has extra support needs, developmental delays, or a formal diagnosis we will work with you and any other service providers to:

- assess your child's strengths, interests and needs;
- develop a care plan, outlining strategies, supports, and necessary program/staffing modifications to assist your child in the program;
- contribute to Child and Family Support Plans, outlining identifying goals and priorities; and
- provide community resources or referrals.

**If additional staff is required to support your child's care and well-being**, external funding must be available and confirmed prior to attending. If a child is already attending and additional staffing support is required, external funding will need to be confirmed to continue attendance. If funding for extra staff is unavailable, alternate options for care will be discussed with the family.

For further information about our Inclusion policy, please contact the Program Manager or Program Supervisor.

## SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

VSOCC's school age programs complement children's learning at home and at school; support children to develop their interests, build life-skills and independence; and explore possibilities through recreation and leisure activities.

Our educators use an emergent, play-based approach to planning activities, and they intentionally observe and listen to children as they play to identify the children's natural interests and inquiries. We believe children are excited to participate in activities based on their interests, strengths, needs, and experiences.

We strive to provide children with opportunities to feel safe and respected; and to

- participate in making, following, and re-working of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world;
- recognize, accept, and express a wide range of thoughts and views;
- explore and learn about family, community and the wider world;
- express positive regard for others and respect for self and others;
- learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity; to understand that all persons have value; to accept and welcome individual differences; and to begin to recognize discrimination and inequity and to respond appropriately;
- experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures; and
- to express their own points of view and reflect on others' views.

### Free play, open exploration

A choice of a variety of activities and materials are offered for exploration, including:

- STEM<sup>2</sup> activities to foster curiosity, including science experiments, math orientated games and activities, and building and engineering activities such as Lego & other building materials
- Language experiences including word games and activities, reading, storytelling, and writing;
- Creative expression activities including arts, crafts, drama, music, dance and movement.

### Group Activities

Group activities give children opportunity to explore new hobbies and recreational activities, while developing their social skills. Activities include:

- Cooking, sewing, crafting, arts, sports and academic focussed activities;
- Volunteering, leadership and teamwork activities;
- Emergent team projects; and
- Creative exploration and new experiences.

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<sup>2</sup> science, technology, engineering and math

## Active & Outdoor Play

A minimum of 60 minutes of outdoor active play is important for the physical health of all children and is required by the Childcare Licensing Regulations. Indoor and outdoor active play are planned and offered daily, including neighbourhood walks and visits to local parks, at least one to two times a week, and group games, team sports, dance and creative movement activities.

## No Electronics

VSOCC programs do not use electronic devices, such as tablets, smart phones, computer or gaming devices, with children except under special circumstances related to curriculum and with approval of the Manager. **Please keep your child's cell phone or other electronics at home as they may be damaged or lost if brought to the program.** VSOCC is not responsible any lost or damaged electronics.

## WALKS & FIELDTRIPS

Fieldtrips and walks provide opportunities to explore and learn about the local neighbourhood, the community, the urban and the natural environment. These activities also promote exercise and healthy bodies.

### Walks

Walks occur at least twice a week and include visits to local playgrounds and parks. All groups return to their centres by 4:45 pm. A walk schedule for each season is provided in advance in the program newsletter, and any changes are posted or emailed to families as soon as possible.

### Fieldtrips

! Fieldtrips are planned for the majority of Professional Development Days, and 1 to 3 times per week during Winter, Spring and Summer Break. Some trips may include the use of public transit or chartered bus service, while others may be within walking distance of the centre. Each fieldtrip requires specific parental / guardian signed permission in order for children to participate, and some venues may require additional venue-specific waivers. Parents/ guardians are welcome to attend field trips with their children. Please speak to the Program Supervisor if you wish to attend a fieldtrip.

Fieldtrip notifications and permission forms are posted for families in advance of upcoming fieldtrips with activity and location details. If your child is unable to attend the walk or fieldtrip, you will need to make alternative arrangements for your child's care for the duration of the walk or field trip.

! **Pick up and drop offs during fieldtrip and walks:** Programs aim to leave their centres at 10am and return by 3pm. For the safety of all children, **please arrive at the program room by 9:30am**, and **pick up your child after the scheduled return** to our centre. Children will not be received or released during the fieldtrip, including at the venue.

**Cancellations:** We reserve the right to cancel fieldtrips in cases of staff shortage; low attendance; inclement weather; or venue schedule changes.

## MEALS

### Snacks

A snack is provided after each school day, and on full days, in the morning and the afternoon. The snack menu is posted by the sign-in counter.

## Water Breaks

Children are encouraged to be aware of the impact their activity levels and the weather has on thirst and their bodies and to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

## Lunches

During full days, we frequently go on walks and fieldtrips, and therefore, the children will be lunching picnic-style. Please provide a portable lunch, which does not require heating or additional preparation and a bottle of water. Do not pack foods containing nuts or nut oils, as there are children with severe, life-threatening nut allergies in our centre, and refrain from packing pop; soda; sugary snacks and candy.

## Shared Foods

To reduce the risk of exposure to allergy causing foods and cross contamination, we are unable to serve any homemade foods that have been prepared offsite to the group. For special occasions such as birthdays, you are welcome to bring a selection of uncut fruit or vegetables to share. Please speak with the Program Supervisor or Educator.

# HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## Personal Hygiene

**Handwashing:** Washing hands is key to preventing the spread of germs and/or illness. All children are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet, when returning from outdoor play, before and after meals and snacks. Please encourage your child to wash their hands when arriving or departing.

**Washroom:** Regular opportunities and reminders to use the toilet are provided throughout the day, and during walks and fieldtrips.

If your child requires assistance with their personal hygiene activity, the Educator will ask your child for consent. Only if your child agree to the assistance, will the Educator help the child with their personal hygiene. We respect children's right to say "NO".

## Information and Records

For your child's safety, it is extremely important that our information and records are kept up-to-date. **Please notify educators immediately if there are any changes** in telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, emergency contacts, custody information, medical information, allergies, etc.

## Immunization



Vancouver Coastal Health strongly recommends that children receive the immunizations appropriate to the child's age. Should there be an outbreak of a reportable communicable disease which is included in the BC Childhood Immunization Program, children who do not have current immunizations for that specific disease will be excluded immediately from the childcare program until such time as the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority approves their return. Childcare fees remain payable.



## Medications

In order to administer medication to your child or if you want your child to self-administer medication while in the School Age Program, all medications including over the counter medications and alternative herbal medications must be prescribed by your child's physician or accompanied by the physician's written instructions. The exact dosage and frequency must be included.

To give permission to administer medication, the parent / guardian must:

- Complete and return the "Permission to Administer Medication" form; and
- Provide the medication in the original container. Prescription medication must be clearly labelled with the child's name, name of drug, the dosage, date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration of the drug.

## Allergy and Scent Aware

All VSOCC childcare programs are “allergy and scent aware”. As some children and educators are highly allergic and/or sensitive:

- ❗ • **Do NOT bring any nut products into VSOCC programs**, including products that “may contain traces of peanuts or tree nuts”. Information regarding severe allergens can be found through the Government of Canada, Tree Nuts—Priority Food Allergens website.
- ❗ • Please **avoid wearing scents** in our programs.

## If my child has allergies

Inform educators of your child’s allergies, especially those that are life threatening. For life threatening allergies, the Program Supervisor will

- Work with you to prepare the “Allergy Care Plan”;
- Notify and train the educators regarding the allergy and plan; and
- Notify all families of life-threatening allergies in the program.

Medications to treat life threatening allergies and the allergy care plans must be provided to the program before your child can attend.

## Sunscreen

Parents/ guardians are responsible for applying sunscreen on their children before their arrival at the centre.

Educators will assist children to re-apply sunscreen as needed throughout the day, and in the afternoon, prior to going outside. **Please provide a bottle of lotion sunscreen labelled with your child’s name. NO sunscreen sprays as it is a slip hazard. Educators will only apply sunscreen supplied by the family for their child.**

Parent/guardian’s written permission to apply sunscreen on your child is required, and is included on your child’s “Emergency Card” information and completed during registration.

## Health Services

Public Health Nurse Practitioners from Vancouver Coastal Health may visit our Centres. If consultation regarding a child’s health and/or development is required, the supervisor will discuss need and purpose with the child’s parents / guardians and request written permission before initiating the consultation.

If you have any health questions, call your child’s physician or the Public Health Nurse Practitioners at your closest community Health Centre OR Healthlink BC at 811.

# ILLNESS & OUTBREAKS

Children need to be well enough to participate in all aspects of our daily program, including playing outside in the rain, snow or sun. VSOCC follows the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) health requirements as outlined in the VCH *Sneezes and Diseases*<sup>3</sup> resource book. This resource provides information about prevention, symptoms and treatment of common illnesses, communicable diseases and infestations. If you have questions or concerns, please contact an educator to discuss whether your child is well enough to participate.

## STAY HOME WHEN SICK

**Children must stay home when they have:**

- A fever of 38.5°C or higher;
- Gastro-intestinal symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea;
- Eye or ear discharge / infection;
- Is unable to *fully* participate in all indoor & outdoor program activities, and/or requires one-to-one care.
- Undiagnosed rash or skin infection;
- Known or suspected communicable diseases;

Please contact your program to notify us of your child’s symptoms and of any diagnosis made by a medical doctor.

<sup>3</sup> VCH’s Sneezes and Diseases Resource Book is available online: <https://sneezesdiseases.com/>

In certain situations, we may ask you to provide a doctor's note to confirm your child is well enough to return to the program. When a doctor's note is required, your child's doctor must state the diagnosis and that your child is not/no longer contagious.

### If my child becomes sick or injured at the Centre

Please be accessible by telephone while your child is in attendance at the program, and/or designate an alternate emergency contact.

If your child becomes sick or is injured, our Educators will call you. If you are not available, our educators will contact your emergency contact person(s).

If a child has symptoms of illness that require the child to be excluded from the program, parents/ guardians must arrange to pick up their child (or send an authorized alternate person) immediately.

In an emergency, we will call an ambulance and an educator will accompany your child to the hospital. The educator will let you know to which hospital your child is being taken.

### Outbreaks

We send emails alerting families to a confirmed outbreak of a communicable disease.

### Children may return ...

- After the **fever** breaks and no fever medication is required;
- 24 hours after the last incidence of **vomiting or diarrhea**;
- With a note from the doctor stating the **ear / eye infection symptoms** are not contagious or when the condition clears. If their eye or ear infection require antibiotics, return after 24 hours of first dosage or as indicated by the doctor.
- With a child's doctor note identifying the **rash** and stating not contagious; and / or
- Your child is able to fully participate in all indoor & outdoor program activities.

For known or suspected communicable diseases conditions for return vary. Please refer to [Sneezes and Diseases](#).

## EMERGENCIES & SECURITY

During the Program Orientation Meeting, the Program Supervisor will confirm our designated meeting area and alternative locations in the event of emergencies.

### Fire & Earthquake

We practice fire drills once a month and earthquake drills four times per year. If full evacuation of the facility is necessary (i.e. an earthquake, water or gas leak), the educators and children will evacuate to a safer location. Every attempt will be made to call parents/guardians or the designated emergency contacts and a sign will be posted on the centre's front door letting you know where to find us. You may also call our Administration Office at 604-718-6555 for further information.

### Building Alarms

If, at any point, you enter the parking lot or our Centre and there is an alarm going off please immediately exit the building and meet the educators and children at their designated meeting place.

### Security

**Do NOT let strangers into the building.** When entering and exiting, wait and ensure the doors are closed completely, and that no child has exited the building without their parent/guardian or an educator present.

Your key card/fob is for your use ONLY. **Do NOT share.** If an alternate person is picking up your child, direct them to buzz, knock or call the Program to be given access.

If you see any suspicious persons in or around the building, maintenance issues, or a safety hazard, please notify educators immediately.





## Playground safety

Our school age programs use the school's playgrounds which are maintained by the Vancouver Parks Board. If there are any concerns about the playgrounds, please let our staff know, and also report your concern to VAN 3-1-1.

## IMPORTANCE OF FAMILIES

We value families and respect diverse family structures, cultures and parenting styles, and we support and promote the importance of families as partners, as these relationships are critical for high quality childcare.

### Family Visits

Parents/guardians are welcome to be in the program at any time. We encourage family members, including extended family and other caregivers, to spend time in our programs, and to stay, play and observe with your child. You are welcome to:

- Read books with children
- Join in activities such as baking, art, games, field trips, or other special events
- Share your family traditions, celebrations, or cultural practices
- Share your skills, talents, or expertise with children and educators.

Let us know if you would like to share your special skills or hobbies, such as craft skills, art projects, musical talents, building, physical (yoga, dance) interests, or if you would like to share something about your work.

If you wish for other visitors or family members, such as grandparents or family friends, to visit your child in the program, please speak to the Program Supervisor to arrange the visit.

### Birthday Celebrations

We respect that each family may have their own preferences around celebrating their child's birthday. If you wish to celebrate, please speak with the supervisor. The Supervisor will give you the list of allergens in order for you to avoid bringing in allergy causing foods, and provide some suggestions for approved snack options for sharing.

In order to ensure health, safety and sustainability, as well to respect family choices and rights to make decisions for their children, please do not bring "goody bags" or gifts for the children. If giving a gift is important, you are welcomed to donate a favourite book to the program on your child's behalf to share with the children.

Invitations to birthday events outside VSOCC programs should be either distributed to all children in the program, or not distributed within the program.

### Celebrations, Traditions and Holidays

Our community is multicultural and diverse. In efforts to honour and promote understanding and awareness of different cultures, practices, and heritages, we will regularly ask you share your family and culture's traditions, celebrations, and values which are important to you. This information will help the educators to plan, collaborate, support, engage, and create opportunities to incorporate celebrations, traditions and holidays into our program plans and activities in a child-led, developmentally appropriate manner to ensure activities are meaningful and inclusive of all children in our care. Activities involving food must comply with VSOCC's food and allergy policies.

### Community Services

In the spirit of providing holistic care to children and families, VSOCC partners with other community services, organizations and professionals to support children and families. Resources, information and community events are key aspects of VSOCC Services.



## FEES & WITHDRAWAL

### **Childcare Fees**

All fees are due on the first of the month, paid through automatic withdrawal (pre-authorized direct payment). Your child's space is reserved and therefore fees are required regardless of your child's absence (i.e. vacation, illness).

### **NSF cheques**

A \$25 bank service charge is applied for cheques rejected due to non-sufficient funds. Full payment must be received within 5 business days.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

There is a late fee charge of \$1 per late minute. Payment is due at the time of late pick-up and will be processed by signature on the 'Late Pick-Up Form' provided by the educator on duty. The fee will be deducted using the pre-authorized direct payment process used for payment of fees.

### **Withdrawal Notification**

Withdrawals from VSOCC Child Care Programs require a minimum of **45 -day notice period**, or payment in lieu of notice and will be effective on the 15th or the last day of the month.

Notice of withdrawal must be received in writing. Request a Withdrawal Notice Form from the Program Supervisor or by email to [info@vsocc.org](mailto:info@vsocc.org). Return the completed Withdrawal Notice to [info@vsocc.org](mailto:info@vsocc.org).

### **Income tax receipts**

Tax receipts for your child care fees paid are distributed annually by the end of February.

## PRIVACY

The Vancouver Society of Children's Centres is committed to the privacy and protection of personal information and follows responsible information handling practices in keeping with privacy laws.

We collect, use, and disclose personal data in order to: better meet your service needs; ensure and address the health and safety needs of children in our care; for statistical purposes; to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements; and to inform you about the program in which you are registered. You will hear from VSOCC periodically about other VSOCC programs and services, program improvement initiatives, VSOCC Fundraising, and other opportunities that may interest and benefit you and your children.

The VSOCC Privacy Policy is available on the VSOCC website.

### **Photo & Video Policy**

We consider the personal information of children to be very sensitive and take seriously our responsibility to protect the privacy of all children in our programs. Outside of designated times and locations, we do *not* permit parents/guardians or families to take photos or videos in our programs.

## DONATIONS

We welcome families and community members support and contributions to our programs. We accept financial donations and can issue tax receipts to donors. Speak with your program's supervisor or manager, or contact our Administration Office if you wish to make a financial donation to VSOCC.

Occasionally, programs or centres may request donations of specific toys, equipment, or materials which meet VSOCC curriculum standards, guidelines and requirements.

For reasons related to space, health, safety, waste and junk removal, VSOCC will not accept:

- Unsolicited / unrequested donations of toys, clothing, linens, books, furnishings or household items
- Used furnishings or stuffed toys/household items

## Tell us what you think—we value your input!

You will be asked to complete a *Family Survey* at least once a year. This information helps us improve our overall delivery and services to children and families.