



# **Vancouver Society of Children's Centres**

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

### **School Age Programs**

## Table of Contents

2	Welcome to VSOCC Introduction to VSOCC	13	Supervision & Guidance Attendance, Arrival & Departure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Arriving</li> <li>• Pick Up &amp; Departures</li> <li>• Independent Departure</li> <li>• Authorized &amp; Unauthorized Pick Up Person</li> <li>• Impaired Pick Up Person</li> <li>• Guardianship Agreements</li> <li>• Late Pick up &amp; Fees</li> </ul>
3	Our Employees		
4	VSOCC Philosophy & Guiding Principles		
5	The Importance of Families Communication with Families		
6	Educator Relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media Policy</li> <li>• Outside Work for VSOCC Families</li> </ul>		
7	Operating Hours and Closures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Closures</li> </ul>	15	Health & Safety – Child Illness, Injury & Outbreaks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay Home When Sick</li> <li>• Sick or Injured at the Centre</li> <li>• Return Timeframe</li> <li>• Outbreak</li> </ul>
8	Our School Age Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the School Year</li> <li>• During Summer</li> </ul> School Age Program Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free play, open exploration</li> <li>• Group activities</li> <li>• Active &amp; Outdoor Play</li> <li>• Screen and Electronic Use</li> <li>• Birthdays, Celebrations, Traditions and Holidays</li> </ul>	16	Health & Safety - General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Hygiene</li> <li>• Immunization</li> <li>• Medications</li> <li>• Allergy &amp; Scent Aware</li> <li>• Sunscreen</li> <li>• Information &amp; Records</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Facility Emergencies</li> <li>• Fire &amp; Earthquake Drills</li> <li>• Building Alarms</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Playground safety</li> </ul>
9	Walks & Fieldtrips		
10	Getting Ready for Your Child's 1 <sup>st</sup> Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation</li> <li>• Items Required</li> <li>• Items to bring everyday</li> <li>• What NOT to bring</li> </ul>	18	Inclusion & Extra Support
11	Gradual Entry	19	Privacy Photo & Video Policy Fees & Withdrawal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments</li> <li>• NSF Cheques</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> <li>• Income Tax Receipts</li> </ul> Donations
12	Food & Nutrition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSOCC Snacks</li> <li>• Water Breaks</li> <li>• Lunches</li> <li>• Shared Food</li> </ul>		



# Welcome to VSOCC

Welcome to the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC) – School Age Programs

We look forward to working with you and your family. This handbook provides information about our School Age programs and is reviewed with families during the program orientation meeting. If you have any questions or would like more information, please speak with your Program Supervisor.



**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.

## Introduction to VSOCC

### 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.

### 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).



## 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 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 Associate Program Director

#### Program Supervisor

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

#### School Age Educators

- Cares for, guides and supervises 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

#### Casual Educators (replaces School Age educators who are away)

- Supports our team with supervision and care of children;
- Work during Pro D Days, Winter and Spring Break and the summer months to provide full day service; and
- Have a minimum of 20 hours of training on health, safety, guidance and licensed childcare.



## 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 and their families:

- Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential.
- Families have the most important role in promoting their child's well-being, development and learning.
- Educators are committed to supporting children's unique strengths, interests and inquiries.
- People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community and place.
- Environments are inclusive and create possibilities for learning and well-being, unique to each child and family.
- Play is integral to children's lifelong health and learning.
- Relationships are the context for well-being and learning. There is a reciprocal relationship between children, families and educators.
- Learning is holistic<sup>1</sup>.

We support actions outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action, and 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.

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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.

## The Importance of Families

At VSOCC, we recognize and value families as primary caregivers and the most important source of knowledge about their children. We respect diverse family structures, cultures and parenting approaches. We support and promote the importance of families as partners, as these relationships are critical for high quality childcare.

### Family Visits

Families are welcome to be in the program. Family members (including extended family) are welcome, to spend time in our programs to build relationships with their child's educators and to 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.

### 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.

## 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 post 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?

**Concerns between a family member and an individual educator**, please 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.

**Concerns related to the program**, speak with the Program Supervisor, and if not resolved, contact the Program Manager or Associate Program Director. Where appropriate, the CEO may be involved.

**Concerns related to an organizational policy or Board decision**, please contact the Associate Program Director or CEO to discuss the issue.

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

Annually, we invite families to participate in a survey, and you are encouraged to complete the survey. This provides families an important opportunity to provide feedback. Additionally, we welcome feedback and encourage your comments, questions and feedback at any time.

## Educator Relationship

### Social Media Policy

When employees engage in communication with families outside of the work environment, there is the potential for confusion regarding the employee and employer relationship and the professional relationship that VSOCC must maintain between employees and families. It also raises potential concerns about confidentiality. As such, VSOCC employees are not permitted to interact or engage with, nor provide access to their personal social media accounts or services to current and past parents or children of VSOCC programs or services. Also, VSOCC employees are not permitted to “follow” parents and children or exchange direct messages with families via personal social media, emails or text.

### Outside Work for VSOCC Families

VSOCC strongly discourages VSOCC employees from providing services outside of VSOCC hours for VSOCC families (i.e. babysitting, house-sitting, etc.) When employees engage in services with families outside of the work environment, there is the potential for confusion regarding the employee and employer relationship and the professional relationship that VSOCC must maintain between employees and families. It also raises potential concerns about confidentiality.

# Operating Hours and Closures

## Hours of Operations

### Monday to Friday

Program	Open	Close
After School Program <b>Please note:</b> 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.	3:00 pm	6:00 pm
Full Day Closures (Pro D, Spring Break & Winter Break)	8:00 am	6:00 pm
Summer (July 1 <sup>st</sup> – Labour Day)	8:00 am	6:00 pm

## Closures

Our centres are closed on the following days:

New Year's Day

Family Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Victoria Day

Canada Day

B.C. Day

Labour Day

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Thanksgiving Day

Remembrance Day

Christmas Eve (early closure at 3pm)

Christmas Day

Boxing Day

Winter Closure (*three business days between Christmas and New Year's*)

\*When a holiday falls on the weekend, we will be closed the following Monday

## VSOCC Pro D Day

Up to five days per year. These dates will be shared with families well in advance

## VSB Pro D Days and Closures

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) and/or;
- The Government, Translink and/or other authorities declare an extreme weather alert and/or an advisory to avoid unnecessary travel;
- 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 or, if not available, the emergency contact person, advising that children must be picked up immediately.



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 will be posted on the VSOCC website front page.



## Our School Age Programs

Our childcare programs are licensed through Vancouver Coastal Health; providing rules and guidelines for licensed childcare facilities using the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the BC Child Care Licensing Regulations.

### During The School Year

#### After School Program

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

Our after-school program starts with a snack and a group time to talk about the activities offered for the day. 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 (VSB Pro D Days & Winter & Spring Breaks)

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/>).

### During Summer

During Summer, our programs focus on the children's shared interests, giving them the chance to explore topics in greater depth. We support their creativity through larger, more involved projects and enhance their experience with special workshops or field trips.

## 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 people 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
- 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

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

## 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
- Creative exploration and new experiences

## 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, group games, team sports, dance and creative movement activities.

## Screen and Electronic Use

VSOCC programs do not use electronic devices, such as tablets, smart phones, computers or gaming devices, with children except under special circumstances related to curriculum and with approval of the Program 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 for any lost or damaged electronics.

## 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 your Program Supervisor. You are welcome to bring a selection of uncut fruit or vegetables. Either you or the educators can then prepare the food at the program. This will ensure there is no cross contamination with allergy causing foods.



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 invite 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.

## 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 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 most of the 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 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 field trips and walks:** Programs aim to leave their centres at 10am and return by 2pm. For the safety of all children, **please arrive at the program 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.

## Getting Ready for Your Child's First Day

### Orientation: Before Your Child's First Day

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



Please share any vital information you feel is important for us to better understand and care for your child, and help ease their transition to our program, including any food restrictions, allergies, diagnosis or guardianship 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"/> Immunization                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Membership  | <input type="checkbox"/> Allergy/Asthma Exposure History (if relevant) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized Pick-Up Person  | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Consent Card                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Information   | <input type="checkbox"/> Child and Family Profile sheet                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four 4"x 6" Photographs of your child, recent head shot for emergency use and display/identification |  |

#### 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 Ziploc bag (max. size 11" x 11"), clearly 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



**Please Note:** These items must be received in the program **PRIOR** to your child attending the program. IF any of these items are missing/incomplete, your child cannot attend until all items are received.

## Items To Bring Every Day 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 belongings 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:**

- ☐ Rain jacket with hood, or warm winter coat
- ☐ Waterproof, warm boots
- ☐ Warm hat and gloves/mittens

- ☐ Waterproof pants (helpful on snowy days or when going on trips where children are likely to get cold or wet)
- ☐ A change of dry clothes

- **For hot or sunny days, children should have:**

- ☐ Outdoor shoes or sandals are secure on your child's feet. For safety, **NO** flip flops.
- ☐ Sun hat & sunglasses
- ☐ Lightweight, long sleeve shirt or sun shirt

- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Sunscreen lotion / cream. Please do NOT send your child with sprays, as they create very slippery floors.

## 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 phones, 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 employees.

## 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 (i.e. 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

During the first two weeks after Labour Day, we will adjust our kindergarten pickup times to align with the gradual entry schedule of the kindergarten classroom. Please drop off your child directly at their kindergarten classroom at their scheduled start time. When your child is dismissed, our educator will pick them up from the classroom, sign them into the school age program and walk them safely to the program's room.

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

For children in Grade 1 to 5, gradual entry into the program will be based on your child's individual needs, abilities and past experiences in school and childcare settings.

On the first day, your child should attend for 1 to 2 hours. This allows them to meet the educators and become familiar with the program's routines and expectations. If your child adjusts well during this time, they may be ready to start attending without any further gradual entry.

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.

## Food & Nutrition

### VSOC Snacks

Our snack menu meets the BC Child Care Regulations requirements, Canada's Food Guide, and is approved by a Dietician from the Vancouver Coastal Health. Food preparation is done in a way to minimize the risk of cross contamination of foods and with an awareness of any food allergies present within the program.

A snack is provided after each school day, and on full days, in the morning and the afternoon. The snack menu is posted in the program room.

### Water Breaks

Children are encouraged to be aware of the impact their activity levels and the weather have on their 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.

Please **DO NOT** pack:



- Any products that state they "may contain traces of peanuts or tree nuts", foods containing nuts or nut oils, as there are children with severe, life-threatening nut allergies in our centre
- Candy, chocolate, chips and soda pop

### 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 educators.

## 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

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. 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
  - Be compassionate, kind and express emotions in healthy and appropriate ways
  - Remain calm, make decisions and think before acting
  - 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.

## Attendance, Arrival and Departure

### Attendance



**Given the significant demand for childcare spaces, VSOCC requires regular attendance. 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. The educators' primary responsibility is the supervision of children; should you wish to speak with an educator at length, an appointment may be made to ensure adequate time to discuss as educators may not be able to 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 a school age educator.

**Children in Grades 1 and higher** are expected to arrive on their own to the program room. Educators will monitor children's arrivals and sign them in.

**A child is considered MISSING**, if they do not arrive to our program by **3:15pm** and a notification of absence has not been received from their parent. Educators will check with school admin 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.)
3. **Sign in** your child as you are leaving.

**On field trips 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 a 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 prior to program closing time, to enable your child to depart in a relaxed, unhurried manner. Educators may need to provide you details about your child's day.

## Independent Departure

For the safety of all children, we do not permit school-age children to sign themselves out of the program or leave to walk home on their own or with others. Children **MUST** be picked up by a parent or an adult on your child's authorized pick-up list, listed on the registration form.

## Pre-Authorized Pick-Up Person(s)

Your child will be released only to parent(s)/guardian(s) or persons over the age of 16 years authorized by the parent/guardian and listed on your child's authorized pick-up list, listed on the registration form. 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 cannot pick up your child and you must send someone who is not on your child's authorized pick-up list; please contact the program to provide authorization and the person's full name. Please inform your pickup person to bring government-issued photo identification as our educators will be checking their photo identification upon arrival.

## Unauthorized Pick-up Person

If a person arrives to pick up your child and they are not on your child's authorized pick-up list and/or specific instructions were not received, educators will not allow the person to pick up or enter the childcare facility.

Educators will contact the parent/guardian immediately and unless authorization is granted, educators will not allow the person to pick up your child. If contact with a parent/guardian cannot be made, the person will be asked to leave.

### 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.





### 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 and will:

- Offer to call the alternate parent/guardian
- 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.**

### Guardianship Agreements

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

Educators will always follow the written guardianship agreement and court orders. Educators will not become involved in guardianship disputes and will not provide documentation to be used by either party. Educators will appear at guardianship proceedings only when issued a court subpoena.

### 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.**

If we have not heard from you by **6:00 pm**, an educator will:

1. Phone your home, cellular phone and place of employment
2. Phone the alternate person(s) on your registration form

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 (MCFD)** to pick up your child.

If you are late and your child is no longer at the centre, please contact MCFD 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 incidents of late pick-up violates the conditions of the Parent Agreement and childcare services may be withdrawn.

## Health & Safety – Child Illness, Injury & Outbreaks

VSOCC follows the guidelines of the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) health resource '[Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases](#)'. This resource provides information for families and educators 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 NOT attend the program when they have:**

- A fever of 38°C or higher;
- Gastro-intestinal symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea;
- Is unable to *fully* participate in all indoor & outdoor program activities, and/or requires one-to-one care.
- Eye or ear discharge / infection;
- 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. If your child is unable to *fully* participate in all indoor and outdoor program activities, and/or requires one-to-one care, due to illness or injury, they are unable to attend the program.





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 attends 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.

### **Children may return ...**

- **24 hours** after the **fever** breaks and no fever medication is required
- **24 hours** after the last incidence of **vomiting or diarrhea**. If the Environmental Health Officer has declared the program in a Gastro-Intestinal Outbreak, your child may return 48 hours after the last incidence of vomiting or diarrhea
- With a note from the doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist, as per the [BC Government Website](#) stating the **ear / eye infection symptoms** are not contagious or when the condition clears. If your child requires antibiotics, they may return after 24 hours after the first dosage or as indicated by the doctor
- With a child's doctor note identifying the **rash** and confirming it is not contagious
- 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 Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) health resource '[Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases](#)'.

### **Outbreaks**

VSOCC is required to notify VCH of all outbreaks of communicable diseases. VSOCVC follows all protocols, as directed by the Environmental Health Officer; at times, this includes collecting samples during an outbreak with parent permission. We will post information about any outbreak of illness.

## **Health & Safety - General**

### **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, educators will ask your child for consent. Only if your child agrees to the assistance, will the educator help the child with their personal hygiene. We respect children's right to say "NO".

### **Immunization**

Vancouver Coastal Health strongly recommends that children receive 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

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 doctor or accompanied by the doctor'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". Special care is taken to avoid exposure to allergy-causing foods and strong scents as some children and educators are highly allergic and/or sensitive. As such:



- **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 Note:** We cannot guarantee the exclusion of peanuts or tree nuts.

- Please **avoid wearing scents** in our programs.

## If my child has allergies

It is extremely important to 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 a "Care Plan" based on the allergy;
- 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 in place before your child can attend the program.**

## Sunscreen

We strongly encourage families to be "sun-smart" and to provide appropriate clothing (wide-brimmed hat, sun shirt, sunglasses) and sunscreen for their child. As per Child Care Licensing Regulations, we require your written permission to apply sunscreen on your child. This consent is included on your child's "Emergency Card" information and completed during registration.

- 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 sunscreen lotion labelled with your child's name. **Spray sunscreen is not permitted** given it can create slipping hazards. To reduce the risk of an allergic reaction; educators will only apply sunscreen supplied by the family for their child.

## 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.

## 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.

### Facility Emergencies

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 emergency drills regularly; 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 report your concern to VAN 3-1-1.

## 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.



## 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. Our Privacy Policy explains how VSOCC collects, uses, discloses and retains personal information, including the personal information of minor children, parents and legal guardians of minor children and employees.

Our Privacy Policy can be found on our website: : [VSOCC – Vancouver Society of Children's Centres – Privacy Policy](#)

## 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.

## Fees & Withdrawal

### Payment

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 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.

## Donations

The Vancouver Society of Children's Centres is a registered, charitable, non-profit society.

- We accept financial donations and can issue tax receipts to donors.
- Occasionally, programs or centres may request donations of specific toys, equipment, or materials which meet VSOCC curriculum standards, guidelines and requirements.

If would like to donate, cheques can be made payable to the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres. You can also donate online by visiting: [www.vsocc.org](http://www.vsocc.org)

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 furnishing or stuffed toys/household items

