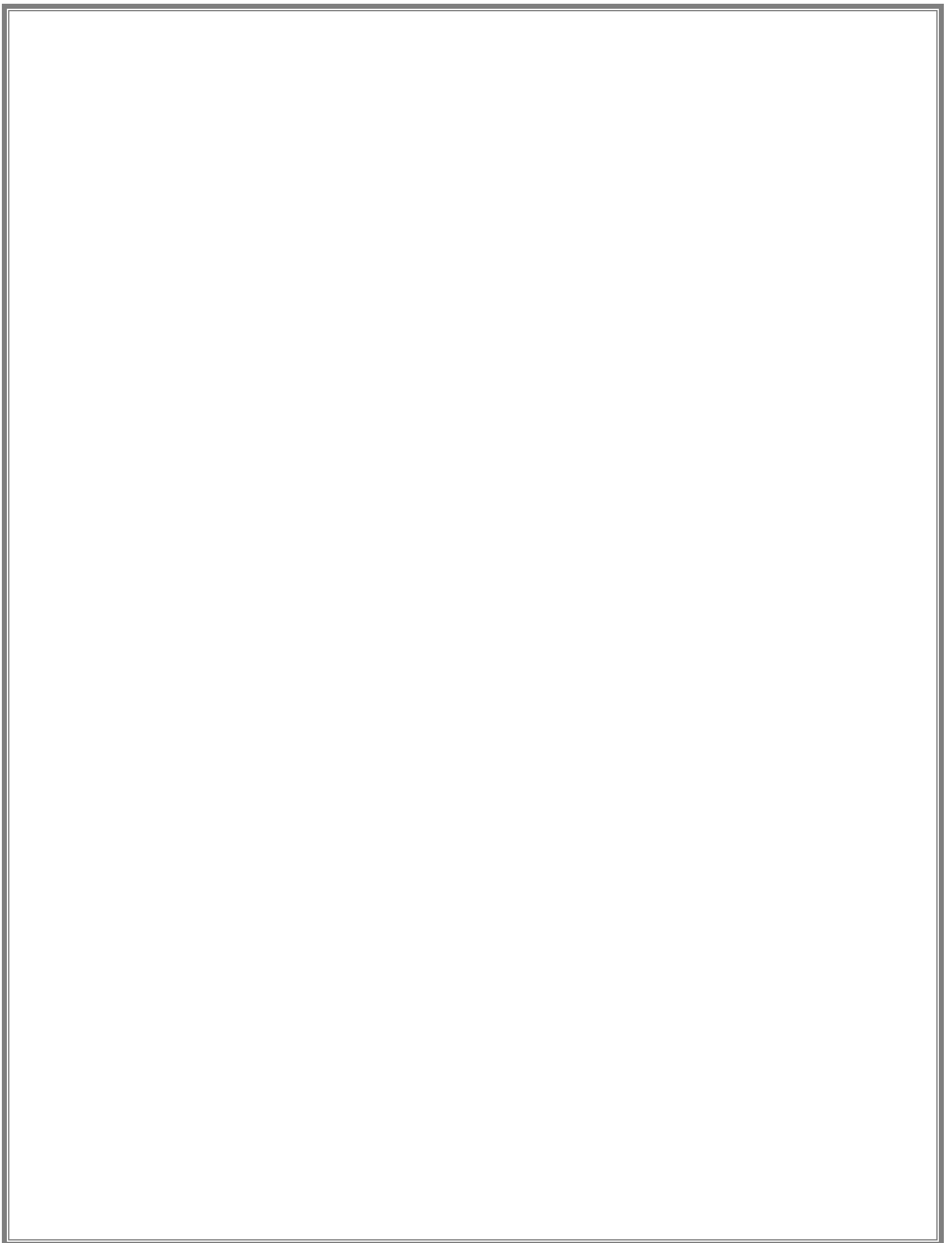




Early Learning Program

**Parent Information
Booklet**



DUNCAN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Building on Faith, Family & Community

Mission Statement of DCS

Our Hope... We confess that Christ is Lord of all and He calls us, in **community**, to **equip** students for a life of **discipleship** as **stewards** of His creation.

Vision Statement of DCS

Our Vision... Duncan Christian School aims to be a dynamic community of believers who strive to meet the needs of every child by providing a stimulating and diverse learning environment that encourages students to be disciples of Jesus Christ by:

- Responding to Biblically faithful curriculum and worship
- Teaching Christ-centered social responsibility that develops Christ-like mind and character
- Encouraging positive choices that enhance physical, mental and spiritual health
- Emphasizing environmental stewardship for God's creation
- Providing service-learning opportunities both locally and abroad
- Celebrating each individual's unique needs, gifts and potential.

Duncan Christian Early Learning Program

Phone (250) 746-3654 Fax (250) 746-3615

Early Learning Program Director Email: dbrandsma@duncanchristian.com

General School Email: office@duncanchristian.com

Table of Contents

Welcome	1
Teacher's Role	2
Philosophy	2
Admissions	2
Registration Requirements	3
Fees	3
Class Times	3
About Your Teachers	4
Program Outline	4
Daily Routine	4
Separation	4
Gradual Entry	4
Arrival and Pick up	4
Parental Access	5
Late Fees	6
Withdrawal	6
Attendance	6
Health and Illness	6
Updating Information in Your Child's File	6
If Your Child has Allergies	7
Medication	7
Immunization	7
Birthdays	7
Snacks	7
Book Club	7
Pictures	7
Active Play and Screen Time Policy	8
Clothing	8
Field Trips	9
Parent Communication	9
Child Abuse	9
Conflict Resolution	9
Guidance and Discipline	9
Fire Drills/Evacuation	10
Earthquake Kits	10
Disaster Planning	10

Revised for 2023-2024

Duncan Christian School Early Learning Program Handbook

Welcome

God created preschoolers full of imagination and curiosity. They have an exciting world at their fingertips ready to explore. Our aim at Duncan Christian School is to offer an enriched, safe and stimulating environment that recognizes the God-given uniqueness of each child and allows them to explore and develop a love for learning.

As the saying goes, play is a child's work and the classroom is his/her laboratory. Through play and various activities, including music and movement, creative art, games, field trips, stories, outdoor play, Bible time and quiet time; your child will be given the wonderful opportunity to develop his/her God given gifts and talents in all areas of learning; including social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical.

Beginning school is an important step in your child's life. Every child is unique with special needs, interests, and characteristics. We look forward to partnering with you to help your child grow, learn and develop, both as an individual and as a member of our community.

We hope this handbook will help you and your child adjust readily and happily at this important time in their life. We look forward to sharing many fun and meaningful experiences with you and your child.

How do we as early childhood educators facilitate your child's growth during the school year?

- Giving every child unconditional love with smiles, friendly words, encouragement and care
- Showing each child respect by considering his/her opinions and validating feelings
- Providing limits that are reasonable and understandable to create a safe place
- Giving opportunity to succeed and build confidence, being sure the tasks are challenging and not frustrating
- Helping each child to be responsible, giving him/her the tools to do his/her own "task"
- Providing opportunities to make choices (ex. "Would you like to play at the sand table or do a puzzle?")
- Developing problem solving skills, giving guidance while children work out their own problem
- Knowing the individual needs of each child through a good knowledge of child development, working at meeting areas of growth through planning appropriate activities
- Celebrating accomplishments, one step at a time
- Nurturing and supporting children's differences and uniqueness
- Providing opportunities to develop children's interests as the children initiate them, but also introduce and utilize teacher initiated activities

Philosophy

Duncan Christian Early Learning Program is a play based program which focuses on exploration, discovery and creativity. Social development is a very important part of your child's emotional growth and our program is a gentle introduction and transition into this social playground. We foster social development through free play time, discussion time at circle, drama, show and tell and special helper. Our art, math, science and circle curriculum is based on themes throughout the year, with many opportunities for the children to express themselves creatively. We focus on process rather than product, what your child brings home from school may not look like a finished project to you, but it's something they have worked very hard on and will be very proud of.

Admissions

- Minimum required age for admission – 36 months by the end of December
- Children must be completely toilet trained

N.B. Admission into the Early Learning Program does not automatically transfer into admission into the rest of the Duncan Christian School system. A separate application must be made for admission into Kindergarten.

Registration Requirements

Complete the Early Learning Program's registration form for each child you would like to enroll. Attach a non-refundable registration fee of **\$20.00** per child. Make cheques payable to Duncan Christian School.

Please return to the office:

- The completed registration form(s) and the registration fee (\$20) per child
- A copy of your child's birth certificate
- A copy of your child's immunization record.
- A copy of any court order pertaining to your child(ren)
- A current close up picture of your child(ren)

Confirmation of your child's enrollment in the Early Learning Program will be sent by email.

Each child will be on a two month probation to assess the preschool's ability to meet his/her needs.

Early Learning Program Fees

- Current fees are noted on the registration form
- A yearly field trip and special activities fee has been included in the monthly fees.

Fees may be paid in full by the first day of the program; by monthly pre-authorized payments or with post-dated cheques as per the ELP fee options on the registration form.

Fees are calculated on a full school year and are divided evenly throughout the 10 month school year.

DCS Early Learning Program does qualify for the Provincial Government's child care fee reduction initiative. This program aims to make childcare more affordable for all families.

For families who are applying for Government Subsidy, forms can be picked up from the Elementary Office. Please note that monthly fees will need to be paid by families and once the subsidy has been approved, refunds will be issued.

Class times

- 8:00am to 3:00pm

1 to 5 day (Monday to Friday) programs available, days will depend on availability.

Our Early Learning Program runs according to the Duncan Christian School calendar and as such, will be out of session when grades K-12 are out of session. (School calendars are available at the elementary office)

About Your Teachers

The staff/child ratio is in line with regulations from the Community Care Facilities Licensing Act. The early learning program teachers are licensed to practice in BC as Early Childhood Educators and have up-to-date first aid certification. The early learning program teachers are required to submit a criminal record check.

General Program Outline

Daily Routine:

(Routine will be adjusted slightly depending on what we are doing that day)

- Opening circle - Good morning routine (calendar, weather, special helper)
- Free play - Children explore centers and they may do art
- Clean up time - All children are encouraged to help
- Wash routine - All children will wash their hands before snack
- Snack time - Sit down for snack and prayer
- Learning circle/discussion time - Music and movement, stories, drama, and discussion time
- Outside play or gym time (depending on weather) - Gross motor time
- Wash routine
- Lunch
- Quiet/rest time
- Free play and centres
- Closing circle and dismissal - Includes a weekly Bible story or life lesson and goodbye song

Separation

We would like the first days of school to be a positive and happy experience for each child. Separation can be difficult for some children and parents. We ask that parents:

- Discuss with their child their intention to leave
- Say goodbye in a kind but firm manner
- Reassure the child of the parent's intention to return when school is finished
- Be consistent and loving and the child will have a smooth and happy start to the school year

Gradual Entry

- If this is your child's first experience away from you, the teacher will help assess his/her gradual entry needs. If your child is having difficulty adjusting, the teacher will help decide how long your child will stay each day.

Arrival and Pick Up

- Parents or assigned substitute must bring in and pick up their child from the preschool room.
- Child(ren) will be signed in by parent or assigned substitute upon arrival.

- Parents or assigned substitute must make contact with the teacher upon entry.
- Children will only be allowed to leave the facility with parents, guardians or persons specified on the registration form or a person whom has written permission from a parent. The school will assist in making alternate arrangements if a parent/guardian appears “unable” to safely deliver their child home. In the event that there is a concern for the safety of the child due to the adult’s ability to drive safely, the police will be notified.
- Child(ren) will be signed out by parent or assigned substitute upon departure.
- If the parent does not arrive to pick up the child the teacher will:
 - contact both parents’ work and home number(s) and all emergency contact people listed
 - keep trying for two hours at which time Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCF) will be contacted
- If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up the child the teacher will:
 - ask the person to remain outside the classroom until the parent is contacted for consent
 - check the person’s ID before allowing the child to be released
- If the unauthorized person becomes confrontational to the teacher’s request, the teacher will:
 - notify the principal or assistant principal and ask him/her to talk with the person
 - attend to the children in her care including the child in question
- If the unauthorized person forcefully removes the child the principal will:
 - write down the license plate number of the vehicle in question
 - call the police and MCF

Parental Access

- If a parent has a family emergency and arrives unexpectedly, the parent can:
 - phone the school and alert the teacher to the emergency
 - upon arrival, alert the office and they in turn will contact the teacher by intercom
- A notice will be posted on the classroom door if the class is in the playground, gym or out for a walk.
- The school must have all copies of custody agreements, restraining orders and/or court orders denying a parent access.
- If a parent informs the school that the other parent no longer has access to the child, the written documents must be submitted before access is denied.
- If a prohibited parent arrives to pick up the child or visit, the police will be notified immediately and asked to intervene. The other parent will be contacted and asked to pick up his/her child.

Late Fees

Parents are required to pick up their children promptly at the end of class. More than one late occurrence (more than 5 minutes late) will result in a late fee charge of \$10.00 per late occurrence. This fee must be paid before the child returns to class.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal notice of 30 days is required. Failure to submit adequate notice will result in forfeiting one month's fees.

Attendance

School is in session from September to June observing the same statutory holidays and professional days as the rest of the school (K-7) including Christmas and Spring Break. Early Learning Program begins on the first Tuesday after Labour Day.

- There are no refunds or fee reductions for statutory holidays, sick days, or for family holidays which may be taken throughout the school year.
- An annual Duncan Christian School calendar will be available in September. School events will be advertised in the school newsletter on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. You are invited to attend all school events.
- For school closures due to bad weather, lack of heat or water, or an emergency, please listen to local radio station 89.7 Juice FM. The decision to cancel school will be made no later than 6:30 AM.

Health and Illness

Our Early Learning Program is committed to provide a safe and healthy place for each child. A child with a communicable disease must be kept at home. This includes fever, cold, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, chronic cough, pink eye, etc. The following points are observed:

- Parents must call the school if their child is not attending.
- Children must be kept home if not able to participate in outdoor play.
- If a child has been exposed to any contagious disease (ex. Chickenpox, mumps, measles, etc. or a parasite like lice) the school must be notified.
- Children must be fever free and have stopped vomiting/diarrhea for a twenty four hour period before returning to school.
- If your child becomes ill at school:
 - child will be isolated in comfort and with supervision.
 - parent or emergency number will be contacted.
 - if no contact person can be reached, the child will remain isolated and observed.

Updating Information in Your Child's File

Information about your child needs to be kept up-to-date at all times. Please inform the supervisor of any changes of information such as: immunization records, change of address, email address or phone number, changes in custody or authorized pick up persons, etc. We will transfer all the information you provide into your child's file.

If Your Child has Allergies

Your child may be allergic to various substances and this needs to be brought to the attention of the teacher. This is especially true if the allergy is to any food type. If your child requires special treatment in case of a reaction (such as bee sting) be sure that the teacher is aware of it and that there is a kit on hand at the school at all times.

Medications

No medication will be administered by any school staff member, prescription or over-the-counter, unless a "Permission to Administer Medication" form has been completed. Please ask your doctor if the dosage times can be set up to fit your home schedule. This way you will have control personally of administering amounts and time of dosage. Verbal consent will not be accepted. Children taking prescription medication orally may only return 24 hours after the start of the medication.

Immunization of Children Required

All children who attend Duncan Christian School Early Learning program are strongly recommended to have completed all the standard course of immunizations.

The student registration form has space for providing this information and parents are required to notify the Early Learning Program Director, updates to their child's immunization. Information provided must include: DPTB-HIB, MMR, HepB.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special and exciting for each child. The teacher will celebrate each child's birthday during the school year.

Snacks

Snacks are not provided by the school. Snacks need to be precut and put in a reusable, labeled container. Water or juice should also be sent in a reusable, labeled container. We strongly encourage only nutritional snacks, such as fruit, veggies, cheese/crackers or granola bars, as recommended by the Canadian Food Guide. Please do not send pop/candy.

Scholastic Book Club

Every month you will receive a Scholastic Book Club order form with your newsletter. There is no obligation to purchase books and please keep in mind that not all books are suitable to family values. The school benefits by receiving credits to select books for the classroom.

Pictures

- Individual photos are taken in September, class photos in the spring.
- Throughout the year photos will be taken of your children in the program. If you do not wish to have your child photographed please indicate your preference on the registration form.

Active Play and Screen Time Policy

Duncan Christian School Early Learning Program recognizes the importance of physical activity and the need to limit screen time for young children. Implementation of appropriate physical activity and screen time practices support the health and development of children in care, as well as assisting in establishing positive lifestyle habits.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the children in our program are supported and encouraged to engage in active play, develop fundamental movement skills and have limited screen time.

Active play is important as it helps promote healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement. Active play also helps build strong bones and muscles, improve balance, assists with development of gross and fine motor skills and helps promote confidence and concentration. It is our expectation that children will go outside every day. If you feel your child is too sick to go outside he/she is too sick to be at school.

In order to promote physical activity Duncan Christian School Early Learning Program commits to:

- Providing children with at least 120 minutes of active play per day.
 - This will include both outdoor and indoor activities and include a daily gym time.
 - If weather impedes outdoor activity, indoor active play activities will be increased to meet active play minutes.
- Providing a variety of play materials both indoor and outdoor that promote physical activity.
- Assure a safe independent and cooperative play environment.

Screen Time Limitations

Screen time in the DCS early learning setting. Duncan Christian Early Learning Program does not encourage individual screen time which is the rationale for limiting individual screen time to less than 30 minutes per day. DCS does not have devices for children to use or computer time as part of our daily classroom activities. Our program does use screen time to enhance our singing and movement time with interactive music, we also occasionally watch a short story at circle time. This amount of time averages approximately 15 minutes per day.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable play clothes to school. During cold or rainy weather, please send along coats, boots and mittens. An extra pair of non-marking VELCRO shoes are required to be left at the school for indoor play (shoes with laces are acceptable if the child can tie his/her shoes quickly and without help). Sunscreen and a hat should be worn from April to June. Children should bring a knapsack with an extra pair of pants and underwear for unexpected accidents. All personal belongings must be labeled with the child's name.

Field Trips

Our program includes local field trips to various interesting places in the community. Notices will be sent home as each event approaches. We require a 3 to 1 child to adult ratio during all field trips; as such, we strongly encourage a parent or grandparent to accompany and drive their child on the field trip or find an adult who can take his/her place. A yearly field trip and activity fee is included in the school fee to help cover field trip and other activity expenses.

Parent Communication

- Throughout the year you will be receiving newsletters to inform you of things happening in the Early Learning Program such as field trips, themes, etc.
- A parent information board is located near the classroom informing you of field trips, special announcements, reminders, etc.
- Please inform the teacher or school secretary of any pick up/drop off changes, days your child will be away, or any other info you would like the teacher to know about.
- Be sure to make the teacher aware of any events or problems that may affect your child's behaviour, whether it be his/her health or just a matter of "getting up on the wrong side of the bed."
- Please keep the school update with current emails as most correspondence comes thru email.

Child Abuse Policy

We hope and pray that all children attending our school are growing up in a secure and loving environment. Although, should a situation arise in which a staff member has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is abused or neglected, that staff member is morally and legally obligated to file a report immediately with the Ministry of Children and Family Development. In these matters, we follow a protocol published by the Society of Christian Schools in B.C. If you should suspect abuse in the centre then you are required by law to report it to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Conflict Resolution

When a parent has a concern, grievance, or complaint it must first be directed to the teacher or parent involved in a manner of open dialogue with the intention of resolving the problem. If healing does not occur due to tension, lack of communication, etc., the assistant principal/principal shall be notified and both parties shall meet with the assistant principal/principal in an effort to restore a healthy situation. If a satisfactory resolution is still not made, the concern should be brought to the board.

Guidance and Discipline

Children feel accepted and secure when they know what is expected of them. The classroom is a happy place when it is free from confusion and disorder. There are clear guidelines that we use to encourage appropriate social and behavioural development such as:

- Setting limits early in the year to recognize appropriate and inappropriate

- behaviour
- Using choices and natural consequences
- Redirection and distraction
- Teacher facilitated problem solving
- Giving clear instructions

Cool down time is used when a child physically hurts another child. The child needs to know his/her behaviour is unacceptable. This method allows the child to have a few minutes to reflect on his/her feelings and those of the other child if applicable. Then with the help of the teacher, the child is given the opportunity to come up with a positive plan for future situations.

Fire Drills/Evacuation

Fire and evacuation drills are posted in the centre and practiced monthly. All staff, volunteers and other adults will be familiar with fire drill procedures.

Earthquake Kits

Each child is required to have an earthquake kit containing the following items:

- emergency card with contact information for an out of the Cowichan Valley contact person
- a comfort item (photo, small stuffed animal)
- recent picture of the child
- juice box and/or soy, milk (not refrigerated kind), fruit to go, fruit source bars, nutrition bars, cliff bars, power bars, granola bar
- a ziploc freezer bag will be sent home with the blank emergency card for you to fill out and return with all the above items

Disaster Planning

In the event of an emergency:

- If we are unable to return to our building, we will be located next door at Duncan Christian Reformed Church. Once relocated, we will contact you regarding our circumstances and pick up procedures.
- No child will be dismissed from the center unless a parent or caregiver or other previously designated adult comes for him/her.
- No child will be released from the center with another person, even a relative, babysitter, unless the Early Learning Program has written permission to do so. With this in mind, please ensure that you have provided us with an up to date contact list.
- All parents, caregivers or designated parties, who come for the child, must sign for their release.
- Parents and alternate caregivers may not pick up a child until all students and staff are accounted for and the teacher approves the release of students.
- Please do not call the school. We must have all the lines open for emergency calls.
- Help us protect your child during a disaster, please be patient with the student release procedure.