

Bridgewater Day Care Centre of the Bridgewater United Church

Parent Handbook

Welcome to the Bridgewater Day Care Centre of the Bridgewater United Church. This non-profit, licensed child care facility provides early learning opportunities for 70 children ages 4 months to 10 years. The Centre operates under a volunteer committee, with regulations and guidelines established by the Nova Scotia Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development and The Bridgewater United Church. The Church has been the original sponsor of the Day Care Centre since October 1969. In 1972 the Centre accepted funding from the Nova Scotia Provincial Government and became a subsidized child care centre. This Centre is a unionized workplace. Permanent full, part time and term child care and kitchen staff are certified with the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3688. Administrative staff (Executive and Assistant Director), and on-call staff are non-unionized.

Our staff are trained in Early Childhood Education, must complete a Vulnerable Sector and Child Abuse Registry check and they must hold a valid Emergency First Aid CPR Certificate.

Our Mission

The Bridgewater Day Care Centre was established in 1969 as an outreach program of the Bridgewater United Church and operates as a not-for-profit organization to provide high quality, affordable, play based early childhood education within our capabilities. We strive to self evaluate, and adapt to changes within the Early Childhood Education field and meet or exceed expectations of the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations. We foster an inclusive, accepting community while providing support for the healthy social, emotional, physical and developmental needs of each child served and their families.

Our Philosophy

Bridgewater Day Care Centre believes that children develop best within a safe, caring and challenging play based environment. We see our role as an extension of the families we serve, recognizing that parents/guardians are ultimately the experts in their child's life. We respect ourselves, we respect each other and we respect our environment.

Our Vision

To provide the families we serve with a professional, early learning environment for children to thrive in by providing security, stability, and nurturing adventures which promote independence, positive self esteem and creativity as well as happy memories within a family first, inclusive setting.

The primary obligations of our service are as follows:

- the welfare of our children and the quality of service we provide
- to respect the dignity and rights of each child in a way which will enhance his/her opportunity to function as a contributing member of society
- to share with parents our knowledge and understanding of their children's learning and developmental progress
- to respect the confidential nature of information obtained about children and their families, and to treat it in a responsible manner

Family Communication Plan

Purpose : To ensure families are kept informed of what is happening with Bridgewater Day Care Centre and to comply with the Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Regulations.

Information regarding the operation and program of Bridgewater Day Care Centre will be communicated initially through orientation* of families into the Centre. Parent information will be given verbally, by electronic communication app, phone, email and paper copy.

*Orientation normally involves a parent tour of the Centre, interview with family along with review of Behaviour Management Policy and receipt of parent package which includes Parent Handbook, Admission Form, Emergency Form, and Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Daily - infant and toddler families will have access to daily reports which summarize their child's day. There will be opportunities for families to communicate information and ask questions daily. These daily reports will be kept for a minimum of 6 months.

- all children - in certain circumstances families may request specific communication regarding their child's day, diet, behaviour, developmental concerns. This can take form in a family communication note book which goes from home to day care daily, or notes from the Child's teacher.

Monthly - Newsletters will be prepared highlighting individual classroom activities as well as Centre wide events and news.

Bi-Annual - Centre staff prepare individual progress reports on each child enrolled within our program in May and November (school age children have a written report completed once per year). Parent teacher meetings are scheduled in June and December for families to meet with classroom teachers and discuss their child's program. Posted notices for parent teacher meetings will be done at least two weeks in advance on the Centre's bulletin board and published in the Centre's newsletter and calendar.

- Parent Committee meets a minimum of twice per year, normally in May and October. Purpose of the Parent Committee is to be kept informed on Centre program as well as inspections / regulatory / Ministerial requirements. Meetings are open to all staff and families at the Centre. Membership must be a minimum of 3 current parents, 1 licensee representative, and a staff member. Minutes from each meeting must be kept on file and posted for all families to view. Posted notices ,which include an agenda that parents can add items for discussion to, for parent teacher meetings will be done at least two weeks in advance on the Centre's bulletin board and published in the Centre's newsletter and calendar.

The Role of the Parent - parents can engage with the Centre by volunteering on Board of Directors and /or Parent Committee; by attending parent/teacher meetings; by assisting with fund raisers; by daily communicating with teachers; by discuss any concerns with the Executive Director.

The following documents are posted on the parent bulletin board located upstairs, outside of the Day Care office: 1) NS Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations, 2) Parent Handbook, 3) Day Care License, 4) most up to date inspection report, 5) behaviour guidance policy, 6) current menu, 7) notification of funding provided by the Minister.

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The following documents are posted on the parent bulletin board located on the landing leading to the upstairs: 1) List of names of the current members of the parent committee 2) a copy of the most recent minutes of the parent committee.

The following documents are posted on the Centre's website www.bridgewaterdaycare.ca : 1) Menu, 2) Parent Handbook, 3) Behavior Guidance Policy, 4) List of names of current staff, permanent volunteers, board of directors, and parent committee members, 5) monthly newsletter, 6) monthly calendar, 7) closure policy, 8) Centre bylaws, 9) Inclusion policy, 10) current schedule of fees and charges.

Special notices such as unscheduled closures due to severe weather or other factors can be posted on the Centre's website as well.

Daily program plans, class routine, outings, and any communicable illness information is posted on each classroom's bulletin board.

Pandemic restrictions - In the event access to the Centre as a whole is restricted, communications will be done to the best of the Centre's ability while following any directive by Regulatory bodies.

Separate policies/ documents related to families that the Centre currently has, and are not listed above, and are available upon request are:

- NS Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations
- Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings
- Food and Beverage Criteria
- Overdue Accounts Receivable Policy
- Holding Fee
- Admission Policy - Wait list
- Breast-feeding Friendly Environment
- Sun Safety
- Responding to Concerns by Parents, Guardians, and Children
- Adminstrating Medication to Children Part 1 and 2
- Illness in Children
- Pick up Procedure in Regards to Intoxicated Adults
- Child Custody Disputes
- Privacy Policy
- Head lice Policy
- Transporting of Children
- Off-site Activities
- Pick Up Procedure.

Admission/Withdrawal

- Admission, and Emergency forms must be completed for each child prior to attending.
- The hours of the Day Care Centre will be from **7:30 am to 5:30 pm** Monday -Friday. The Centre is normally open at 7:15 am however staff are not on duty until 7:30 am. A late fee will be charged if a child is not picked up by 5:30 pm.
- The Executive Director must be notified in writing of any change in a child's attendance schedule. In case of absence, the Day Care Centre must be notified.
- Every child must be left in the care of a staff member upon arrival. We cannot accept responsibility for any child where no verbal contact has been made with a staff member.

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- At the time of registration the names of persons dropping off and picking up the child must be given. If there is a change with one of the aforementioned, the Centre must be notified. Anyone not on the pick up list will not be permitted to remove the child from the Centre without parental consent.
- Any child consistently absent for reasons other than illness, may lose their space.
- Upon registration, all parents must sign authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment at the South Shore Regional Hospital, in the event they cannot be contacted during an emergency concerning their child.
- Upon registration, all parents must provide the Centre with the name, address, and phone number of a relative or friend who may be called upon should the Centre be unable to contact the parents in the case of an emergency. Parents unable to provide an emergency contact, must ensure that the Centre staff have daily contact numbers.
- Parents withdrawing their children from the Centre must give a written notice at least two weeks in advance or pay their regular two week fees as penalty.

Payment

- Fees will be determined by the Day Care Committee and periodically reviewed. A period of five hours is considered to be a full day and will be charged at a full days rate.
- Scheduled parents are required to submit a written schedule 15 calendar days prior to the month they are booking. Failure to do so may result in being unable to confirm their space. 48 hours (2 working days) notice must be given in order to cancel a scheduled day.
- The Day Care Centre will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day	Heritage Day	Good Friday	Easter Monday
Victoria Day	Civic Holiday	Canada Day	Labour Day
Thanksgiving Day	Remembrance Day	Christmas Day	Boxing Day
- The Centre will close at 1:00 pm Christmas Eve and at 4:00 pm New Year's Eve
- Holiday's which occur on a Saturday or Sunday will be taken on the next immediate work day. This only applies to full day closures. Parents are required to pay their regular fees for the above mentioned Holidays.
- A charge per cheque will be levied for each cheque returned by a bank to the Day Care Centre
- Parents are required to pay for all days their children are registered at the Centre, including their vacation and sick days, holidays and storm days.
- In the event of a disruption of child care provisions, parents are responsible to make arrangements for child care services until the Centre is operational again. If the disruption should occur during the normal work day the Centre will be responsible for child care until the end of the day.
- In the event of strike action by unionized employees child care will be covered by non-unionized staff and volunteers from the community at large until the end of the day. Parents will be contacted by telephone with as much notice as possible.

Health & Safety

- All children are expected to participate in all facets of the day care program each day, indoor and outdoor, weather permitting. If a physician or parent feels that a child is not able to participate in an activity, it is the parent's responsibility to find alternate care for this period.
- Children must not be brought to the Centre if they exhibit any of the following;
Stomach Cramps Diarrhea Listlessness Elevated Temperature Vomiting
Contagious Rashes Severe Cold Symptoms or any other symptom of a condition which will impede the child's participation in the regular daily program.

- If a child becomes ill while at the Centre, his/her parents will be contacted; if the illness is severe the Emergency person will be contacted if unable to reach the parents. Medical forms, issued at the discretion of the Executive Director or her Deputy, may be required before a child will be readmitted to the Centre following any illness. The decision of the Executive Director or her Deputy regarding the admission of a child suspected of illness is final.

- All medicine must be in its original container and given to a staff member upon arrival at the Centre. A consent form must be signed by the parent/ guardian in order for staff to administer medication.

- The Children and Family Services Act provides the legal basis for child protection in Nova Scotia. The purpose of this Act is to protect children from harm, promote integrity of the family and assure the best interests of children. It is the responsibility of the Department of Community Services to enforce the Act through Children's Services Agencies.

The staff of the Bridgewater Day Care Centre have an understanding of the signs of abuse, of the laws respecting children in need of protection, and of their obligation to report suspected abuse.

Should a report be made, a Children's Service Agency will have a social worker(s) investigate the report of child abuse or neglect. Police may assist social workers to carry out protection functions by assisting when children are apprehended and by keeping the peace. It is the responsibility for the police to gather evidence, to interview the suspect, and lay charges if a crime has been committed under the Criminal Code

Program

- Our program philosophy is that children learn through play, keeping this in mind, children should be dressed for indoor and outdoor activities throughout the year. Children's clothing should be inexpensive and labeled as the day care are not responsible for lost articles. A parent will be contacted if their child arrives with inappropriate clothing.

-The following is a list of items that each child should bring daily;

Complete change of clothing, sunscreen SPF 25, outside clothes for all weather, hats, rubber soled shoes, (diapers, specialty foods, non prescription medicine, special medical equipment.) if applicable.

- At times photographs are taken of the children while attending the Centre. They may be used for classroom displays and/or newspaper inserts. Parents may or may not receive notice of such photographs being taken. The use of video is also at times used for various reasons, normally permission slips are signed by parents advising them of the purpose of the video taping. Parents wishing their children not to be included in any photographs or video taping of any form must advise the Centre immediately upon admission. This direction should be written and signed by the parent/ guardian.

-Daily routines are posted in each classroom.

-To support positive relationships with parents, the Bridgewater Day Care Centre will remain neutral in regards to child custody disputes. Child care staff will have an understanding of this policy and demonstrate it to parents through consistent and non-bias communication, to parents known to the Centre staff. Child Care staff will treat all parents equally and in a respectful manner. Child Care staff will acknowledge that their expertise is in child development, not in parental capabilities. Child Care staff will treat all parental interactions as confidential information. The only exception being concerns of child abuse. Custodial parents must provide court ordered documentation regarding restrictions on visitation and access by non or joint custodial parents. Non or joint custodial parents are asked to respect legal agreements, failure to do so will result in the denial of access/visitation and the police will be notified if necessary. Any further action will be dealt with on an individual basis. Costs

incurred by the Bridgewater Day Care Centre as a result of an employee subpoenaed for court due to a child custody dispute will be at the expense of the requesting parent. These costs are payable prior to court date and are non-refundable.

Baby Friendly

- Bridgewater Day Care Centre welcomes mothers to breastfeed anywhere in the Centre. A quiet space with comfortable chairs, is available in the parlour off the gym, for mothers wishing privacy to breastfeed.
- Upon enrollment of an infant, parents will supply the Centre with an Infant Feeding Plan. This plan will include instructions on the storage and feeding of breastmilk/formula; procedure to follow if supplies run out during the day; a transition plan to other milks; a transition plan to introduce solid foods/new foods. All breastmilk/formula and solid food brought from home will be labeled with each child's name, the date, and any instructions needed to prepare.
- Infants will be allowed to explore their food, and feed themselves.

Food/ Nutrition

- The Bridgewater Day Care Centre will adhere to the Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings as per Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- Centre staff will respond to all children's (4 months - 10 years) cues around hunger and fullness. Children will not be made to finish food that has been served to them. Children will be provided with snacks and meals outside of the regular schedule as required. Meal and snack times are part of our daily routine where staff provide a calm, and predictable transition.
- The Centre follows a four week rotating menu plan. Changes to this menu will be posted and dated. Copies of the menu are available in the Day Care office or on the Centre's website. A list of ingredients for the foods we serve are available upon request.
- Food purchases are made with establishments that are regulated by the Department of Agriculture.
- Snacks or food items donated by parents/ or the community must be pre-approved by the Centre Director, comply with Food and Beverage Nutrient Criteria and also, if applicable, comply with Department of Agriculture Regulations. A list of ingredients must be provided and kept on file, as well as written instructions for preparing, serving and storage. All donated items will be dated and labeled upon receipt. Food items brought to Day Care by a parent/guardian, without prior permission by the Director, will either be refused or placed in the staff lunch room for adults to enjoy.

Parental Concerns

- Any concerns which are not addressed adequately within the Centre or any concerns a parent may have regarding other licensed or unlicensed care can be directed to the following toll free number. Concerns are then investigated by local license officers.

Licensed Child Care complaint number for parents with concerns 1 877 223-9555