

## HELIC Information & Policies

Welcome to Highlands Early Learning Centre!



This information package is divided into the following pages:

2-3	1 - General Overview
4-6	2 - Coming to School
7-8	3 - Gradual Entry
9-10	4 - Getting Involved
11-12	5 - Communication
13-16	6 - Curriculum Overview
17-18	7 - Health & Wellness Policies
18-21	8 - Emergency, Fees & Withdrawal Policies

Becoming familiar with these approaches, routines and guidelines will enable both you, as parents, and the team at Highlands to enhance your child's preschool experience.

*Highlands Early Learning Centre's Vision is to create an inclusive preschool community that honours the individuality of each child and exceptional teachers who instill a passion for learning.*

## **Section 1 – General Overview**

### **HELC preschool Information**

Highlands Early Learning Centre formally known as Highlands Preschool has been serving the needs of North Shore children for over 50 years. It has occupied the present facilities since 1973 and has established a strong reputation in the community for quality early childhood education. We work with approximately 120 children between the ages of two and five and run 13 different classes, in either our morning or afternoon sessions. The school is often filled with the happy sounds of children playing and discovering new things in the classroom, in the gym or outside on the playground.

Highlands Early Learning Centre is a licensed and a registered non-profit society and registered charity (BN/Tax # 107 48 20 RR0001), which is not affiliated with Highlands United Church. We are overseen by a volunteer parent Board of Directors responsible for the strategic direction of the school and administered by a paid Executive Director responsible for all operational matters with support as needed from Board members. Our Annual General Meeting is open to all registered families and held each June. Our Strategic Plan is available upon request and our values and other information is available at: [www.highlandsELC.ca](http://www.highlandsELC.ca)

### **Highlands Early Learning Centre Office Contacts**

Please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director [Daniela Francis](#) via email or voicemail if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions. Daniela's office is on the second floor of the building, up the stairs by the playground doors. The office hours are Monday to Friday: 8:00 – 4:00 PM. Please ensure that you are receiving the Highlands Early Learning Centre emails that are sent through [director@highlandsELC.ca](mailto:director@highlandsELC.ca) as this is the main means of communication, **many times these emails can also be found in your junk folder.**

HELC Office Phone:	604-980-1740
Emergency Director Cell	604-970-3038 <i>text only, no calls (For parents during school hours &amp; if child is sick.)</i>
Web site:	<a href="http://www.highlandsELC.ca">www.highlandsELC.ca</a>
Executive Director:	<a href="mailto:director@highlandsELC.ca">director@highlandsELC.ca</a>
Registrar:	<a href="mailto:registrar@highlandsELC.ca">registrar@highlandsELC.ca</a>
Chair:	<a href="mailto:chair@highlandsELC.ca">chair@highlandsELC.ca</a>

## **The Teachers**

We are incredibly fortunate to boast a dedicated team of Early Childhood Educators, whose passion for teaching is matched only by their unwavering commitment to nurturing and caring for children. These educators have thoughtfully crafted profiles that can be accessed both in the hallway and on our website. Through our inquiry-based, play-centered curriculum and the enriching environment we provide, children are empowered to cultivate the essential skills required for a successful transition to Kindergarten.

Our teachers skillfully employ a play-based curriculum that not only ignites a love for learning but also lays a strong foundation for their academic journey ahead. This approach fosters the development of vital social skills such as respect, empathy, problem-solving, and language proficiency—cornerstones for success in later academic pursuits.

In alignment with the Child Care Licensing Regulations, we maintain a standard supervision ratio. For our three and four-year-old classes, each group of sixteen children is overseen by two Licensed Early Childhood Educators. Likewise, our two-year-old program benefits from the guidance of two Licensed ECE teachers for every class of eight children.

## **Important Dates**

Highlands Early Learning Centre aligns its holiday closures with the North Vancouver School District 44 schedule, including all statutory holidays and school breaks.

To access the latest preschool calendar, kindly visit the HELC website and navigate to the “Current Families” tab.



## **Section 2 – Coming to School**

Specific drop-off and pick-up locations will be shared with you at the beginning of the school year. Drop-off and pick-up may occur in the courtyard or in the back playground or gym. These locations are staggered in order to accommodate parking and make the transitions smoother for all.

### **Arrival Process**

Individuals dropping off children are kindly requested to wait at the assigned drop-off location for their respective class until the teacher arrives to escort the children to their class. When you bring your child to Highlands Early Learning Centre, it's essential to communicate with your child's teachers to confirm their wellness. **While awaiting the commencement of classes and during pick-up times, we kindly ask parents and caregivers to supervise the children under their care.**

### **What to bring to school**

To ensure a smooth and enjoyable day for your child at Highlands Early Learning Centre, please take note of the following items to bring:

- **Dress for Play and Learning Success:** We kindly request that your preschool children come dressed in play-appropriate and comfortable clothing. This often looks like comfortable fitting clothing that can get messy and will allow for very active play without accessories or extras. Clothing that gets in the way will often slow down the children and teachers and could take time away from the fun learning moments occurring.
- **Extra Set of Labeled Clothing:** Please pack an extra set of clothing to be left at the preschool, including socks and underwear, all clearly labeled with your child's name in case of spills or messy outdoor adventures. We recommend using "Oliver labels" for your convenience, as this also supports one of our ongoing fundraisers.
- **Labeled Weather-Appropriate Outerwear:** We will be outside everyday rain or shine, so please equip your child with jackets and outerwear suited to the day's weather conditions. Adequate protection against the elements ensures that they can make the most of their outdoor explorations.
- **Labeled Indoor Shoes (Full Foot Coverage):** Please provide your child with a labeled pair of indoor shoes that offer closed-toe, full foot coverage, such as runners. This practice is essential to maintain a clean and comfortable indoor environment. Crocs or shoes with laces do not make ideal indoor shoes because of our gym time. If you need indoor shoe recommendations, please reach out.
- **Labeled Outdoor/Rain Boots:** Please provide a pair of outdoor/rain boots to be kept at the preschool so your child can explore the outdoors, regardless of the weather, rain or shine.

- **Nutrition for the Day:**
  - Wholesome and balanced snack (and lunch if the child is staying for extended day)A labeled water bottle for staying hydrated with **water only!** (Please no juices, milks, or flavored drinks)
  - **Certain foods not allowed due to safety. If these foods are sent to school in a snack, the teachers are required to remove the food in question:**
    - We are a **nut free** facility. Please do not send nuts of any kind or in any form
    - Please **do not send choking hazards**, even if you know your child is fine with them at home. These including hard candies, lollipops, gum, caramels, popcorn, or whole grapes.
  - **Open Snack Table Approach:** Some classes have embraced an open snack table concept. This encourages children to listen to their bodies and eat when hunger strikes. Our teachers actively support this skill development by reminding children to enjoy their snacks or encouraging them to try something from their snack bags.

Please pack only what is required for school and leave anything else at home out of respect for our teachers' time and their engagement with the children. Toys, play jewellery, or other "at home" items that come into the classroom can create a distraction for the teachers and the children – especially if things are misplaced. Please enjoy preschool items at preschool, and home items at home.

By adhering to these guidelines, you're contributing to a conducive and secure learning environment for your child and their peers. Your cooperation in preparing these essentials is truly appreciated, as it fosters a seamless day of exploration, learning, and joy at Highlands Early Learning Centre.

### **Dismissal Procedure**

Parents and guardians picking up children should proceed to the designated pick-up area and check in with the designated teacher before the child is released outside. Timely arrival is mandatory to prevent unnecessary anxiety for your child during the wait. In the event of lateness, late fees will be applicable (For details, please refer to our Fees Policy point #7).

Children will exclusively be released ONLY to individuals listed as authorized for pick-up. If it's someone's first time picking up your child, our teachers will request photo identification. If a different person is picking up your child and isn't on the approved list, kindly inform the teacher or the HELC Executive Director in advance via written form through email or text to the director's emergency cell at 604-970-3038.

In cases where a child isn't collected by an authorized adult shortly after class concludes, our teachers will attempt to contact you and the other emergency contacts provided. To the extent possible, our staff is legally obligated to avoid releasing a child to any person, whether authorized or not, who can't adequately care for the child. We adhere to the Community Care Facility Act and Child Care Licensing Regulation Section 31. If such situations arise, we'll propose alternatives or involve the appropriate authorities.

### **Use of Preschool Facilities**

GYM USAGE: The gym is exclusively accessible to students under teacher supervision during school hours. It's not open to siblings or students during other times, including before and after school and between sessions. Please discourage your children from entering the gym or using equipment intended for the session.

### **Safety in our Parking Lots**

For safety reasons, please park your vehicle in reverse within the marked parking spots. Kindly use designated stalls only and refrain from obstructing driveways, especially around Brookridge, to minimize inconvenience to our neighbors, HELC parents, and other visitors at Highlands Church. Parents are encouraged to utilize the rear parking lot (enter via Brookridge from Ridgeway). Please avoid leaving children unattended in the parking lot or playground.

**Remember, parking areas are shared spaces often busy with visitors, church groups, and events. Please be patient and respectful to all users of the area. If feasible, consider walking or biking to the preschool on certain days, especially while Edgemont Village undergoes ongoing reconstruction and development.**



### **Section 3 - Gradual Entry**

The gradual entry transition period is a pivotal phase that gently guides your child through the adjustments and changes associated with embarking on their preschool journey. This period plays a vital role in establishing an atmosphere of security, predictability, and trust, contributing to a productive and enjoyable year ahead for both children and families. Our staff is committed to ensuring a smooth and harmonious entry into the preschool environment. The gradual entry process serves as a cornerstone of our approach, fostering a sense of belonging, comfort, and readiness that paves the way for a fulfilling and enriching preschool experience.

**Purpose:** Recognizing the significance of beginnings, the gradual entry process is thoughtfully designed to facilitate a seamless transition into the preschool environment. By easing the separation process for children and families, it fosters successful integration into the class. Regardless of their starting date, every child is introduced to the classroom through the gradual entry process.

**Establishing a Positive Atmosphere:** During the initial days of class, our focus is on cultivating an atmosphere that radiates positivity, comfort, and enjoyment. We believe that these foundational moments set the tone for the entire preschool experience.

**Promoting Security and Acceptance:** Our aim is to ensure that each child, irrespective of prior social experiences, develops feelings of security and acceptance. We advocate for the incorporation of the gradual entry process for all participants in our preschool programs. This tailored approach significantly reduces fears and anxieties, ultimately resulting in a smoother transition.

#### **Process Details:**

- **Introduction to Classroom:** During this phase, instructors introduce children to their classroom setting and their fellow classmates. Essential guidelines and boundaries are reviewed.
- **Progressive Day Length:** The gradual entry process begins with shorter days and progressively extends over the first few days until reaching the full class duration. This gradual lengthening is purposefully staggered to maintain small initial class sizes.
- **Strengthening Bonds:** The abbreviated segments allow staff to establish meaningful connections with each child, nurturing a sense of familiarity and comfort.
- **Parental Involvement:** To foster a healthy attachment to their preschool instructor, your presence and assistance might be sought during the gradual entry period.
- **Individualized Schedule:** Prior to the commencement of the program, you will receive your child's individualized gradual entry schedule. This schedule will detail the progression of days and timings, offering you a clear understanding of your child's transitional journey.

**IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** Some children may require more time to adjust to the preschool environment, even beyond the two-week period. If this is the case, our preschool teachers will continue to support both the child and their family through an individualized transition plan.

This policy underscores our commitment to ensuring a smooth and harmonious entry into the preschool environment. The gradual entry process serves as a cornerstone of our approach, fostering a sense of belonging, comfort, and readiness that paves the way for a fulfilling and enriching preschool experience.

### Managing Separation Anxiety

It's completely normal for young children to experience separation anxiety. This period of adjustment can be both exciting and challenging for them. To help ease this transition, here are some tips and suggestions to consider:

1. **Preparation Through Familiarization:** Prior to the first day of preschool, consider reading books together with your child that revolve around the theme of going to school. This can help familiarize them with the idea and create a positive anticipation. Role-playing scenarios where they play the roles of student and teacher can also offer a playful way to get them accustomed to the preschool environment.
2. **Positive Goodbyes:** When it's time to drop your child off at preschool, opt for a brief yet upbeat farewell. While it's natural to want to linger, a confident and cheerful goodbye can instill a sense of security and assurance in your child. Assure them that you'll be back to pick them up and engage their attention in an activity they enjoy.
3. **Communication:** Throughout this transition, maintain open communication with your child. Listen to their thoughts, feelings, and any concerns they might express. Validate their emotions and reassure them that it's okay to feel a mix of excitement and nervousness.
4. **Establish a Routine:** Consistency and predictability can greatly aid in reducing separation anxiety. Create a daily routine that includes drop-off and pick-up times. When children know what to expect, it provides them with a sense of stability and control.
5. **Stay Connected:** Feel free to check in with the teachers at the preschool. They are experienced in handling transitions and can provide updates on your child's progress throughout the day.
6. **Foster Independence:** Encourage your child's growing independence by allowing them to participate in preparing for school. This might include selecting their backpack or packing a favorite snack. Feeling involved can empower them and boost their confidence.
7. **Adjustment Period:** Understand that the adjustment period can vary for each child. Some might embrace preschool right away, while others might take a little more time. Be patient and supportive, allowing them the space they need to become comfortable in their new environment.

Remember, you are not alone in this journey. Many parents have navigated this transition before, and the teachers at Highlands Early Learning Centre are here to partner with you every step of the way. By offering a blend of preparation, patience, and encouragement, you'll help your child build a positive foundation for their preschool experience. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further guidance. Your child's wellbeing and growth are our shared priorities.





## **Section 4 – Getting Involved**

### **Fundraising and Donations**

As a non-profit society, funding for the operation of the Highlands Early Learning Centre is generated through tuition fees, available Government grants (BC Gaming Grant & North Vancouver District Grant) and our own fundraising efforts. While a large percentage of our operating costs are covered by the \$10/Day ChildCare government support, not all expenses are funded through the program. Capital improvements like cabinets, cubbies, outdoor play structures, and shelters need to be funded from additional government grants and parent fundraising.

As parents whose children stand to benefit from these enhancements, we anticipate and kindly request your active participation and support in our forthcoming fundraising initiatives. The following is a compilation of some of the planned fundraising endeavors:

- **Scholastic:** Scholastic Reading Club provides families with an affordable and convenient way to buy the best in children’s literature either for their home or as a present for someone else. When ordering please use our class code RC222491 For every order placed, Scholastic gives back 20% of the orders spent so our preschool can purchase valuable resources and expand our HELC library for the children.
- **Oliver’s labels:** Start shopping now, and 20% of your purchase will be directed toward our fundraising efforts. Don't hesitate to share the referral link with your friends as well!  
For more details visit: <http://www.oliverslabels.com/HELIC>
- **Cobbs Bread:** When you visit Cobs Bread for your shopping needs, simply inform them that your purchase should be credited to Highlands Preschool before making your payment. Every purchase contributes significantly towards our cause.
- **Little Kitchen Academy:** The LKA GiveBack Program will donate \$10 to the preschool every time a student enrolls for a drop-in class, session and/or camp. At booking, you must select our preschool’s name from the drop-down menu for the question "How did you find LKA?" to ensure we receive the donation.
- **Halloween Pumpkin Fundraiser**
- **Purdy’s Chocolate Fundraiser**
- **Silent Auction**

We greatly appreciate your support, and we will keep you posted on specific dates and updates as we approach each fundraising event.

### **Volunteering**

Engaging in volunteering not only fosters a sense of pride but also serves as a catalyst for cultivating a strong community within the Highlands Early Learning Centre. It offers a valuable window into the day-to-day operations of the preschool, enhancing your understanding of our inner workings.

Acknowledging the diverse commitments of our families, we appreciate that volunteering at Highlands can take various forms to accommodate individual schedules. Although we aren't a parent-participation preschool, our reliance on parent volunteers to enrich the preschool experience remains integral. We kindly request each family to allocate a minimum of four hours for volunteering throughout the school year.

Volunteer opportunities encompass a broad spectrum and can include:

- Serving as class representatives to orchestrate gatherings, rally support for special preschool events, fundraisers, and manage communication via emails from teachers or the parent liaison.
- Providing assistance with laundry.
- Participating in and providing support for school or classroom special events.
- Offering uncomplicated IT support if required.
- Assisting with minor repairs, painting, and maintenance tasks within the preschool.
- Contributing to seasonal playground cleanup days (tasks like sweeping, power washing, and mulch raking).
- Helping in maintaining an organized children's and parent library.
- Sharing personal interests or skills with the class.
- Aiding during walks and field trips.
- Collaborating on various committees at Highlands Early Learning Centre.
- Exploring the opportunity to join our volunteer Board of Directors. Board recruitment takes place annually in spring, and we consistently seek individuals with expertise or passion in areas like accounting, legal, fundraising, marketing, web and social media, strategic planning, and more.

As an alternative, families also have the opportunity this year to contribute \$150 in lieu of fulfilling the minimum 4 hours of volunteering. This dual approach aims to ensure that everyone can participate and play a part in making our preschool the best it can be.



## **Section 5 – Communication**

**The primary mode of communication at HELC is through emails.** Kindly ensure that you have shared your up-to-date email address with the Executive Director at [director@highlandsELC.ca](mailto:director@highlandsELC.ca), and please verify that you are successfully receiving emails (remember to regularly check your spam folder, especially if you're using Hotmail).

Additional communications are through SeeSaw, WhatsApp groups, Bulletin Boards, and Newsletters. Please see more details about each below:

- **Emails:** These will be sent through the ED or through the class rep. Emails are an important way that we inform you about fieldtrips, special events, fundraising events and any important health notices.
- **SeeSaw:** Our educators utilize the Seesaw online platform to share photos and engaging activities from the classrooms. This platform also serves as an online bulletin for pedagogical narrations that offer insights into your child's learning journey and essential information specific to each class. We encourage you to regularly check the Seesaw board for updates.
- **WhatsApp:** This platform will be used to swiftly communicate critical information to our community members in cases of emergency closures or unforeseen disruptions that may impact the normal operations of the preschool. All families are encouraged to join the designated WhatsApp group to receive these important notifications. Participation is voluntary but highly recommended to stay well-informed during such situations.
  - Guidelines: The WhatsApp group will be managed by ED. Messages sent through this platform will be limited to emergency announcements and important updates only. We kindly request that the group is used exclusively for its intended purpose.
  - Respect for Privacy: We emphasize the importance of privacy and security. While the WhatsApp group will serve as a means of communication, sensitive information and personal conversations should be shared through appropriate channels.
- **Bulletin Boards:** Complementing the Seesaw platform, our hallway bulletin boards extend the visual experience. Here, you'll find an array of children's artwork and additional pedagogical narrations that provide a more immersive perspective on their educational endeavors.
- **Newsletters:** The Board and Executive Director send out a monthly newsletter crafted to ensure you stay well-informed about a range of preschool activities. This includes articles centered around child development, along with updates from the board itself, encompassing upcoming fundraising endeavors.

### **Open Communication Approach**

We prioritize the significance of continuous and transparent communication. We wholeheartedly invite you to reach out to your child's teacher or the Executive Director with any inquiries or concerns related to the classroom or preschool. We understand that engaging in discussions during drop-off and pick-up times can be challenging due to the busy atmosphere. To facilitate more meaningful conversations, our teachers are eager to arrange meetings before or after class. Please don't hesitate to request a suitable time for a discussion. Your thoughts and questions are greatly valued.

## Teacher Meetings and Developmental Screening Tool

During the Fall(3&4yo) and Spring(2,3&4yo), we offer dedicated times for parent-teacher meetings to discuss your child's progress in the classroom, drawing from keen observations and the comprehensive Ages and Stages developmental screening tool. Within these discussions, our educators will share valuable insights into your child's advancements encompassing social and emotional growth, cognitive development, individual interests, and areas where additional support may prove beneficial.

Moreover, these meetings provide an ideal platform for families to raise any queries or concerns regarding their child's development. Our Executive Director is available to establish connections with various community resources, such as Supported Child Development, developmental screening tools, public health nurses, speech and language pathologists, and more. These connections can be particularly helpful for addressing concerns or seeking additional guidance.

The Executive Director is also ready to engage in conversations about challenging behaviors, child development, the process of selecting elementary schools, and related topics. As part of our commitment to ongoing learning, the Highlands Early Learning Centre periodically invites guest speakers to present insightful workshops. If there's a specific area of interest that parents wish to explore further, we encourage you to share your ideas or suggestions with the Executive Director via email. Your input is greatly valued as we strive to enhance the learning experience for both children and families.

## Facebook & Instagram

Highlands Early Learning Centre has a Facebook page and an Instagram account which we use primarily for marketing and promotions, but we also post articles, research links and information we find interesting that reflect our values and curriculum at the Highlands Early Learning Centre. Our social media strategy outlines strict guidelines to respect privacy and safety. We encourage all our families to 'like' our pages and follow them. Most of the families that attend Highlands found out about us through another family or friend, feel free to share posts as well and spread the news!



## **Section 6 – Curriculum Overview**

### **Nurturing Early Childhood Exploration**

At Highlands Early Learning Centre, our curriculum is a dedicated conduit for nurturing early childhood experiences that empower children to comprehend the world around them. This approach fosters independence, responsibility, confidence, and effective communication – laying the foundation for their enduring success.

Aligned with the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Children and Family Development, our curriculum draws inspiration from the Early Learning Framework. This comprehensive framework guides our educators in shaping vibrant classroom environments that promote learning through play. This approach resonates with the notion that play is pivotal to a child's holistic development, fostering both physical and intellectual growth that transcends mere pre-academic skills.

The Early Learning Framework's foundation encourages the cultivation of enriching early learning experiences. This framework underscores the concept of "windows of opportunity" during children's formative years, wherein they are uniquely primed for absorbing new stimuli. Our mission at Highlands is to launch children onto a lifelong journey of learning during their time with us.

The framework accentuates the significance of play-based learning, enabling children to develop across four essential domains:

- **Well-Being and Belonging:** Cultivating a sense of well-being and fostering a feeling of belonging within their environment.
- **Exploration of Others, Materials, and the World:** Nurturing curiosity about people, objects, and the broader world.
- **Communication and Literacies:** Building communication skills and a foundation in literacies.
- **Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity:** Fostering a sense of identity, understanding social responsibility, and embracing diversity.

Our curriculum is a testament to our commitment to providing a learning journey that intertwines with the values of the Early Learning Framework. This approach allows us to weave meaningful experiences into the tapestry of your child's education, guiding them towards becoming well-rounded individuals who are equipped to embrace the world with open arms and curious minds.

**A Day of Exploratory Learning:** Every day at Highlands Early Learning Centre unfolds as a canvas for children to paint their interests and curiosities across the various corners of the classroom. Here's a glimpse into the captivating areas they'll delve into:

- **Open Art Area:** A vibrant haven where young minds can unleash their creativity, exploring an array of art materials. While we do encourage wearing smocks and playing clothes, it's worth noting that artistic endeavors may occasionally result in delightful messes. Play clothes and comfortable shoes are ideal attire for these artistic escapades.

- **Block Area:** A perennial favorite, the block area is brimming with an assortment of natural blocks and construction materials. It's a space where teamwork blossoms as children collaborate to craft imaginative structures, problem-solving together while bringing in props like people, cars, trains, insects, and animals.
- **Reading Oasis:** Serene, calming and inviting, the reading area kindles language and literacy development. This area is designed for quiet activities like reading, drawing, or simply taking a moment to relax and recharge.
- **Dramatic Play Zone:** An immersive realm that invites children to recreate the world around them, forging connections and camaraderie. This area is a chameleon, transforming to mirror children's interests. It might become a bustling post office one month and a cozy restaurant or home the next, fostering a sense of belonging and imaginative exploration.
- **Science and Exploration Area:** This space encourages children to engage in hands-on scientific inquiry and exploration. It includes materials for experimenting, observing, and discovering the natural world, fostering a love for science and critical thinking.
- **Sensory Play Zone:** Sensory play is essential for young children's development. This area features various textures, materials, and sensory bins that engage children's senses, allowing them to explore and learn through touch, sight, sound, smell, and even taste.
- **Quiet Reflection Space:** Sometimes, children might need a calming space to retreat to. This area could be designed for quiet activities like reading, drawing, or simply taking a moment to relax and recharge.
- **Outdoor Adventures:** Every day brings the promise of outdoor explorations in our natural playground or gym, regardless of weather. Working in tandem, teachers and children craft an environment that champions natural discovery and gross motor skills development through cooperative games and sports. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play, as screen time remains off the agenda while at preschool.

With these enriching areas, we provide a diverse tapestry for your child's growth, curiosity, and self-expression. It's through these dynamic experiences that we sow the seeds of lifelong learning, creativity, and collaboration.

### **Special Events and Fieldtrips**

At Highlands Early Learning Centre, we curate a range of special events and field trips to ignite the children's curiosity and broaden their horizons. Our classroom adventures include leisurely neighbourhood walks, invigorating library visits, and engaging interactions with community members, parents, and resource persons.

Throughout the year, our skilled educators organize off-site field trips that offer unique learning opportunities. On such occasions, we might kindly ask for a small group of parents to volunteer and join us for the day. In some instances, we may also request you to drop off and pick up your child directly from the venue, enabling the group to relish extended exploration time.

These experiences are carefully chosen and thoughtfully executed. Through these ventures, children forge connections with their community, deepen their understanding of the world, and cultivate a sense of wonder that fuels their learning journey.

## **Behaviour Guidance Policy**

Our behavior guidance approach adheres to the Community Care Facility Act and Child Care Licensing Regulation Section 52. We strictly prohibit any form of corporal punishment, belittling treatment, confinement, hitting, shoving, physical restraining, degrading treatment, verbal, emotional, or physical abuse that could compromise a child's dignity or self-esteem. This includes practices like spanking or withholding necessities as a form of punishment.

Our teachers are guided by the following principles:

- Prevention of harm to the child.
- Prevention of harm to others.
- Prevention of property damage.

We consider the children in our classes as capable and independent individuals, and we strive to develop their skills in these areas. As educators, part of our role is assisting children in learning behavior that is respectful to themselves, others, and our preschool community. Behind every behavior lies a message; understanding this message enables us to guide children towards meeting their needs positively. Most behaviors can be anticipated through teacher observation and constructive discussions with the children.

In our classrooms, teachers employ positive guidance strategies such as:

- Redirecting a child's focus to another activity.
- Encouraging problem-solving skills, fostering discussions about feelings, and facilitating collaborative solutions.
- Cultivating empathy by helping children appreciate differing perspectives and listen to one another.
- Acknowledging and celebrating positive choices, promoting children's pride in their decisions.
- Empowering children as classroom leaders to enhance their self-esteem.
- Granting children autonomy in choosing play areas and open-ended materials.
- Not employing time-outs, as they do not effectively teach children constructive alternatives for the situation. Instead, we focus on explaining why behaviors are inappropriate and suggesting alternative strategies.

In the infrequent event of recurring behaviors, the Executive Director will be notified for consultation. Teachers will collaborate with parents in meetings to address observed behaviors and jointly develop strategies to assist the child. This process necessitates open communication and may span a few weeks to yield behavioral changes. In specific instances, the Highlands Early Learning Centre, in coordination with parents and teachers, may formulate a care plan to address behavior. In extreme cases, with guidance from the Executive Director, parents, and teachers, we might need to create a plan regarding behavior. If necessary, we may provide one month's notice to ask a child to leave the center for the remainder of the school year (details outlined in your signed payment form). We consider it our responsibility to report any indicators of abuse to the Ministry of Children and Families.

## Celebrating Birthdays and Special Occasions

We understand the significance of birthdays and wish to acknowledge them within the preschool environment. To ensure the safety of all children, we kindly ask that **only store-bought snacks** with clearly visible ingredient labels be brought in for birthday celebrations. This enables teachers to record the information accurately in the daily note binder.

In consideration of children with allergies, we maintain a peanut/nut-free environment. At the beginning of September, we will provide a list of specific allergens to avoid when packing snacks based on class allergies. Please note that we are unable to serve treats from home due to the risk of cross-contamination with allergens.

For birthday parties, we kindly request that you **refrain from distributing invitations at the school**. This compassionate approach respects the feelings of all children, preventing any potential misunderstanding or upset among those who may not receive an invitation.

Throughout the year, the Highlands Early Learning Centre may organize various celebrations within the classroom. We encourage you to watch for updates on SeeSaw or in our newsletters. Additionally, families will be invited to participate in special events such as Welcome/Information Night, Pumpkin Carving Night, and the Year-End Picnic. We always welcome the opportunity for families to share their cultural celebrations with the class. If you are interested in this, please communicate with your child's teacher to coordinate arrangements.





## **Section 7 – Health and Wellness Policies**

Highlands Early Learning Centre takes the health and safety of our students and staff very seriously. The below outlines the health and safety policies in place to keep our facility safe from communicable diseases. As public health policies evolve, we are committed to consistently adhering to local government guidelines and regulations concerning health and safety. These guidelines will hold precedence over any existing protocols, ensuring that we maintain a secure environment for our community.

Several health and safety measures are in place to limit the spread of communicable diseases in childcare settings. These include:

- Regular cleaning and disinfection
- Providing regular opportunities for hand cleaning
- Communicating the importance of regular health checks and staying home if sick
- Having procedures for those who become sick while at child care
- Following public health orders and recommendations as applicable.
- All staff are required to have up to date vaccinations

### **Guidelines for Keeping Children Home Due to Illness and New Symptoms:**

Prioritizing the health and safety of our preschool community is essential in minimizing the spread of communicable diseases. Therefore, it is crucial that children who are unwell stay home.

It's important to note that when a child is ill, they should not attend class. Children should remain at home:

- until they have been symptom-free **for 24 hours** and
- AND free of gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) for **48 hours**.

Please ensure your child remains home if they exhibit:

- Any communicable diseases, encompassing conjunctivitis (pink eye), measles, chickenpox, croup, whooping cough, colds, and flus, among others.
- Unexplained rashes or rashes unconfirmed by a doctor to be non-contagious.
- Ingested any medication, including acetaminophen or ibuprofen, within the past 12-24 hours.

These precautions are pivotal in safeguarding the well-being of our learning community. For additional information about when to keep your child home, please see the table below. Thank you for your vigilance and cooperation in maintaining a healthy environment for all.

### **Seasonal Allergies and Chronic Non-Contagious Conditions**

In the case of seasonal allergies or other chronic non-contagious conditions, a health care provider's assessment is required. If it is confirmed via doctor's note that ongoing respiratory symptoms are attributed to seasonal allergies or similar non-contagious conditions, attending the center is permissible.

## Allergies and Health Concerns

If your child has allergies or health concerns, please inform the Highlands Early Learning Centre. We will require you to complete medical forms and leave your child's necessary medication, including an EpiPen or auto-injector, at the preschool.

## Section 8 – Emergency Policies, Fees & Withdrawal Policies and Class Placement & Class Changes Policies

### Inclement Weather

**If the North Vancouver School District 44 closes schools in the area, the Highlands Early Learning Centre will also be closed.** In the event of snow or a power failure, it may become necessary to close the school for the safety of the children. Should this happen, you will be notified by phone/email by your child's teacher or class representative.

### Emergency Procedures

Emergency evacuation drills are practiced on a monthly basis and emergency evacuation procedures are posted in each classroom and clarified with parents each September. In the unlikely event that we are to have to leave the preschool our designated evacuation centre is (TD Bank- 3190 Edgemont Boulevard). We would then get in touch with you to discuss next steps. **Please ensure that your child's emergency forms are current and up to date.**

In the event of a district-wide emergency (i.e. a major earthquake) we will be instructed to listen to the radio or told by emergency services on which Emergency evacuation centre is being opened. The whereabouts of all children will be posted at the Highlands Early Learning Centre. At no time will your child be left unattended.

### Tax Receipts

Highlands Early Learning Centre provides tax-deductible receipts for gifts and donations over a certain amount. In January/February, you will receive a tuition receipt confirming the tuition that you have paid for that time period for tax purposes.



### Affordable Child Care Benefit (subsidy)

The B.C. Government an Affordable Child Care Benefit program which can pay for part of the Highlands Early Learning Centre fees for families registered in programs for 3-5 year olds. If you require further information about the application process, contact us or <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

## Fees & Withdrawals

1. **Non-Refundable Application Processing Fee:** An Application Processing Fee of \$75 per child is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable. The application tuition is payable through PayPal.
  
2. **Class Security Deposit:** To confirm your child/children's enrolment at Highlands Early Learning Centre, security deposit cheque of equal to one month's regular tuition will be required and is payable via cheque. You will receive an email from our Registrar confirming your child(ren)'s class placement, along with further registration instructions. Upon confirmation of registration, a deposit of one month's tuition will become due shortly after.
  - 2-year-old classes: The deposit is non-refundable and is forfeited in all cases of withdrawal from the preschool, including withdrawal prior to the commencement of the preschool year, during the preschool year, or upon failure to provide tuition payments as described below. If your child completes the preschool year with Highlands Early Learning Centre, the preschool will apply the non-refundable deposit to June's tuition.
  
  - 3- & 4-year-old classes please note: Highlands Early Learning Centre is participating in the Universal Child Care Prototype Site \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program. The preschool's participation in this program is effective until March 2026. While participating in this program our withdrawal policy is as follows:
    1. 3- & 4-year-old classes while under the agreement with the Universal Child Care Prototype Site \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program (currently)  
After withdrawal from the preschool, the full deposit will be refunded or a partial deposit will be refunded after all the outstanding amounts are subtracted from the original deposit.  
If your child completes the preschool year with Highlands Early Learning Centre, the preschool will refund the full security deposit once the final childcare fees have been processed by way of the preschool's Rotessa pre-authorized debit (PAD) for June 2023 and the funds have cleared the preschool's bank account.  
If, for any reason, the preschool ceases to participate in the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program, our withdrawal policy will be the following:
      2. 3- & 4-year-old classes if, for whatever reason, the preschool is no longer under an agreement with the Universal Child Care Prototype Site \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program: The deposit is non-refundable and is forfeited in all cases of withdrawal from the preschool, including withdrawal prior to the commencement of the preschool year, during the preschool year, or upon failure to provide tuition payments as described below. If your child completes the preschool year with Highlands Early Learning Centre, the preschool will apply the non-refundable deposit to June's tuition.
  
3. **Tuition Payments:** We ask for a void cheque OR Direct Deposit Form as we will be using Rotessa as a 3rd party pre-authorized debit program. Within the first week of every month, payments will be automatically withdrawn from your account. Please note that there is a \$29 NSF that will be charged if the payment cannot be debited.

4. **Early Withdrawal:** If, for any reason, you need to withdraw your child from Highlands Early Learning Centre prior to July 31, the security deposit paid upon registration will be forfeited and therefore non-refundable, if your child's class is not part of \$10 A Day ChildCareBC Program.

For all withdrawals from and including August 1, Highlands Early Learning Centre requires one full calendar month's written notice (the "Notice Period") to be received by the 1st day of the month preceding the month of withdrawal (the "Notice Requirement"). Tuition is payable and will be charged during the Notice Period; however, your child is still enrolled and is welcome to attend preschool during the Notice Period.

Notice of withdrawal is to be delivered to the Executive Director or Registrar by hand, mail, or email. We will waive the Notice Requirement if we are able to fill the spot within the month your child leaves the program. A refund will be given as of the date the spot is filled. If you have any questions about this policy, please send your inquiry in writing to the Executive Director.

5. **Probationary Notice:** If, despite Highlands Early Learning Centre's best efforts, the preschool is not a good fit for your child, the preschool reserves the right to give your family one month's probationary notice. For this month, the Executive Director will customize a plan to further help your child. Parents must be willing to work with the preschool to implement the decided upon plan or may choose to withdraw immediately. If at the end of the month the situation does not improve you will be required to withdraw from the preschool.
6. **Late Pick-Up Charge:** Children are to be picked-up immediately upon dismissal. Failure to pick-up your child within 15 minutes of classroom dismissal time will result in a Late Pick-Up Charge of \$30.00 per child; any late pick-up after 30 minutes post class dismissal will result in a Late Pick-Up Charge of \$50.00 per child. Parents will be invoiced for this charge by email and payment is due to Highlands Early Learning Centre immediately upon receipt of invoice.
7. **Missed Payments:** There is a \$29 administration charge for any missed payments in addition to any banking charges incurred to the preschool. If three missed payments are incurred, we require payment by cash for all future months. Alternatively, we may request the withdrawal of the child from the preschool. Please note that if you change financial institutions you will need to inform the Executive Director and update banking information to ensure proper payment and not incur any administration charges.

## **Class Placement & Class Changes**

1. **Tiered Lottery-Based Class Placement:** Once registration closes, we will begin our lottery-based placement process. A Lottery meeting is held by the Registrar, Executive Director, and 3 or more Board Members. There, a tiered Lottery is held for placement order.

Our tiered categories are board/staff, returning students, alumni families, and new students. Once the lottery has been held, the registrar will place students 1 by 1 in classes according to their lottery number.

If your first-choice schedule and second-choice schedule is full you will be placed on the waitlist for those classes, and you will be called or emailed and presented with the available options. If at that point all our classes are full, you will be placed on the waitlist. This is a lengthy procedure and can take approx. 6 weeks.

Please note we try our best to accommodate everyone's preferred options, however we cannot guarantee a morning or afternoon placement.

All returning students will be offered a spot. Alumni and new students will be dependant on availability.

Notwithstanding the lottery-based placement process, the Preschool reserves the right to place a child in a particular class to ensure appropriate class composition and a safe learning environment.

2. **Class Changes:** Students who did not receive their first choice of classes will be permitted to move to another class if a space becomes available before October 31st. After October 31st, any vacancies will be offered to families outside the preschool.

Should you require further assistance or have any additional inquiries, please feel free to contact our Executive Director, Daniela Francis, at [director@highlandsELC.ca](mailto:director@highlandsELC.ca)



**Welcome to Highlands Early Learning Centre,  
we wish you a successful year!**