

**HESTER HOW EARLY LEARNING CENTRE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
FAMILY HANDBOOK**

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There are two lasting gifts we can give children,

One is roots . . . . .

The other is wings . . . . .

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## INFORMATION HANDBOOK

**Welcome to Hester How Early Learning Centre!**

**We are pleased to share with you**

**the early learning and care responsibilities for your child**

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### INTRODUCTION

Hester How Early Learning Centre is located on the first floor, east side of Toronto City Hall. The hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Qualified educators are on duty during these hours.

Hester How is a workplace early learning centre established primarily for the use of the employees of the City of Toronto. We serve children from infancy through to six years of age. There are twelve infants (3 to 18 months), twenty toddlers (18 months to 2½ years), twenty-four preschoolers (2½ years to 4 years), and twenty kindergarten (3 years 8 months to 6 years). Children who are eligible for grade 1 and turning six years of age before December 31<sup>st</sup> of any given year, may no longer attend the centre after September of that year.

### PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM STATEMENT

We, the families and educators of Hester How Early Learning Centre, have made a commitment to provide a high quality workplace early learning environment. We believe children grow best in a non-judgmental, non-sexist, anti-bias environment, where they are exposed to a variety of multicultural lifestyles and traditions. To enhance this growth, we promote a co-operative, sharing atmosphere, where questions and conflicts are dealt with in a supportive non-threatening manner.

At Hester How Early Learning Centre, our mission in programming is to provide play-based, flexible, adaptive, dynamic and high quality experiences to meet the needs of every child in an inclusive environment.

We believe that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential, and that the four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish are: **belonging, well-being, engagement** and **expression**.

The principles of ELECT the Continuum of Development and “How Does Learning Happen” are used as the Early Learning Framework (ELF) to guide and support meaningful pedagogy.

We:

- Cultivate and support authentic, positive and responsive relationships and interactions to create a sense of **belonging** among and between children, families, educators, various resource consultants and the world around us, by creating a program that is inclusive, and fostering that sense of belonging by sharing observations and strategies while maintaining ongoing communication with families;

- Nurture children's health, safety, nutrition and **well-being**, and support their growing sense of self, by considering the overall development of the whole child and taking a holistic approach to our programming;
- Provide environments and experiences to **engage** children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and enquiry, by designing indoor and outdoor environments and experiences that spark curiosity, invite investigation and provide challenges that are responsive to individual capabilities, helping the children to extend the boundaries of their learning;
- Foster communication and **expression** in all forms, by modeling various, positive verbal and physical interactions, and encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way, supporting their ability to self-regulate by giving them opportunities to take initiative, tackle challenges with enthusiasm and persistence, and cope with and adapt to challenges, frustrations and the unexpected in everyday living.
- Continually review and document the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families in each program at our monthly program educators meetings, at which time the strategies are modified as required.
- We believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family and children.

Above all, we recognize the connection between emotional well-being and social and cognitive development and the importance of focusing on these areas holistically.

The families and educators of Hester How interact closely in order to establish a positive relationship, which in turn reflects upon the children. This partnership continues with active involvement in committee work and on the board of directors. The board establishes the committees and policies of the centre to support the above philosophy, thus creating the overall networking system that operates Hester How Early Learning Centre. The long version of our Program Statement is emailed to new families and is available on our website.

## **EDUCATORS**

The director is a full time administrator. The assistant director is a full-time educator who replaces the director for scheduled absences and additionally schedules time to attend to some administrative duties. In both scenarios, the educator is replaced in the program by a regular supply educator. A total of fifteen full-time and one part-time educator make up the program educators of the centre. All full-time educators are qualified professionals trained in Early Childhood Education and registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. They have appropriate degrees or diplomas from a recognized educational institution and a variety of suitable background experiences. Professional development continues for educators through attendance at courses, workshops or by using their professional development days to visit other programs. A full-time housekeeper, who is also an RECE, is employed by the centre to serve the hot lunch and maintain the kitchen as well as working part-time in the infant and preschool programs.

The centre also participates in the training of Early Childhood Education students by providing field placement opportunities. Students are closely supervised by the centre's educators to ensure that they provide a high level of care, as well as have a valuable learning experience. Student participation is concentrated in the months from September to May.

## **MEMBERSHIP AND FEES**

A non-refundable \$10.00 registration fee is required upon acceptance of your child in the centre.

In addition, families of children enrolled in the centre and all members of the board of directors, whether parents in the centre or not, are required to pay a membership fee of \$1.00, and are then considered to be members of the corporation. The board of directors is responsible for convening regular meetings, at intervals of no more than two months, which are open for attendance to the general membership of the corporation.

The fees shall be determined by the board of directors, with due and proper notification to the full membership. All fees will be subject to review to reflect the centre's costs.

Regardless of the child's absence from the program, whether it be for vacation, illness, or any other reason, families are required to pay their full/assessed fee in order to maintain the child's space within the centre. This includes payment for all statutory and civic holidays, including Easter Monday, Remembrance Day and other days on which City Hall closes.

In addition to the regular payment of fees, a deposit equal in amount to one month's childcare fees (this includes full fee and subsidized fees) will be payable by each member upon acceptance of his/her child in the centre. A deposit of \$100.00 will be required for families that receive a full subsidy. The said deposit will be returned, and/or applied to fees owing provided that four weeks written notice is given prior to the withdrawal of the child from the centre. Otherwise the deposit is retained by the corporation. When two or more children from the same family are enrolled, only one deposit is collected, at the highest monthly fee.

There will be a reduction of 5% of the fee for the oldest child when two children in one family are enrolled and a reduction of 10% of the fee for the oldest child when three children in one family are enrolled at the centre.

Fee payment for childcare services must be made by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, and 6 months of post-dated cheques will be required every January and June. For each month you may provide either 1 cheque (dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month) or 2 cheques (dated the 1<sup>st</sup> & the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month), each representing 50% of the monthly fees.

Any N.S.F. cheques will be charged a \$20.00 service charge and recurring N.S.F. cheques will require prompt replacement with a certified cheque or cash only.

## **LATE PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY**

If payment of fees is not made on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month the following steps will be followed:  
A reminder notice will be emailed to the family.

Step 1            If payment is not made by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month the parent(s) will be given an invoice and a written (Step 1) reminder, advising that they have until the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month to either make payment in full or meet with the assistant/director and arrange a payment plan\* that is acceptable to the centre.

Step 2 If payment has not been made, or a payment plan not agreed upon by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the parent(s) will be advised, by telephone and in writing from the assistant/director (Step 2), that this will be considered the 1 month notice of the withdrawal of childcare services (15<sup>th</sup> of the next month) should it be necessary to proceed to Step 3.

If payment is made **in full** by the 5<sup>th</sup> of that month the child may remain in the centre. At this stage a payment plan is no longer acceptable.

Step 3 By the 15<sup>th</sup> of the next month, when childcare services are withdrawn, the child can no longer attend the program, the deposit will be credited toward the outstanding fees, and the parent(s) will remain liable for the remaining balance. The parent(s) will receive a call from the director and be given one final opportunity to make payment or they will be placed in collections.

\*Payment Plans: All payment plans must be agreed upon by the assistant/director and must be signed by the parent(s). Failure to honour the payment plan will be reviewed by the board of directors on a case by case situation. Options may range from a revised payment plan to services being withdrawn.

Exceptions: Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the executive committee of the board of directors.

## **WAITLIST & ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND PRIORITIES**

When making enrolment decisions, the over-riding objective of the centre, as a non-profit, is to maintain full enrolment in order to meet the economic needs of the centre and its ongoing financial viability.

The following determines priority for enrolment at Hester How Early Learning Centre when a space is available:

- A child currently enrolled who is developmentally ready to assume a space in the next developmental group, specifically when the move is from infants to toddlers, toddlers to preschool or from preschool to kindergarten.
- A child on the Sibling Priority Waiting List (i.e. the sibling of a child currently enrolled, a child who is returning to care, the sibling of a previously enrolled child).
- A child on the City Waiting List (educators' and parents' permanent or continuing temporary employment with the City of Toronto or Hester How Early Learning Centre).
- A child on the Community Waiting List.

On any of the above mentioned waiting lists, consideration is given to:

- the date of application
- the date for which care is required.
- the age of the child(ren)

We protect and safeguard the personal information of families at all times and advise of your status on the waitlist minimally every six months as families renew and update their application with us. There is no fee for joining the waitlist.

## **GRADUATION PROCEDURE**

Educators in specific programs will discuss and determine graduations of all children enrolled in the centre. Consultation with the assistant/director on individual graduations/moves of children may be requested by educators as determined. The developmental level, readiness and needs of each child are of primary importance when considering any graduations/moves; age of the child is the secondary consideration.

1. The educators will discuss and determine graduations of all children within the centre. Our first come first serve waiting list policy means that the age distribution and ability to graduate children will vary. Children can only graduate as space is available. In the event that a child cannot graduate, educators have the opportunity and flexibility to plan and meet the needs of each child as the children are placed in small program groups.
2. The child's educator will discuss and decide with the next age group educator(s) which child will graduate to the next program (senior infants to junior toddlers, senior toddlers to preschool, preschool to kindergarten). The child chosen to graduate will be the child that all educators involved believe is the most ready at the time. Evaluating the child's readiness will involve consideration of their emotional, intellectual, social and physical development. Where more than one child qualifies for the graduation, consideration will be given to the senior birth date.
3. The child's support educator will inform the family by email of a child's graduation date, usually with at least two weeks notice. As a courtesy to other families, educators will let families know of a graduation when there is more than one eligible child and/or the children are very close in age.
4. Shortly afterwards, the new support educator will contact the family of the graduating child by email to introduce themselves and to invite them in for an orientation to the new program and to provide them with a copy of that program's handbook.
5. When graduating to a new program, the orientation will include a tour of the playrooms to help familiarize the family with the new surroundings and answering any questions the family may have.
6. Generally, orientation lasts approximately 10-15 minutes and usually takes place over lunch/sleep time or at the beginning or end of the day to accommodate the family's and educator's schedules. Other requested time frames will be accommodated where possible.

The assistant/director will address any matters arising from any concerns of educators and/or families. The Hester How board will not make recommendations on matters related to the graduation(s) of specific children unless they are proven to be related to centre-wide policy.



## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Hester How Early Learning Centre will make every effort to provide child care services for children with special needs if the program, educators, and space can accommodate these children. This determination will be made in consultation with the assistant/director, the educators of the centre and resource/support staff, if applicable. Children enrolled who have been identified as having special needs will have an individual support plan on file at our Centre. The individual support plan will be inclusive and age appropriate for the age and development of the child.

## **DE-ESCALATING VOLATILE SITUATIONS**

At Hester How Early Learning Centre children come to the centre with varying needs. We recognize that in some extreme situations (wherein a child is endangering his/herself or others) educators may find themselves having to respond to a crisis situation using physical guidance as a method to defuse and/or de-escalate a volatile situation. These incidents, however rare, may occur at the centre. Physical guidance is only used in situations where a child is in imminent danger of compromising the safety to themselves or other children in the program. For more information please refer to Guidelines for De-escalating Volatile Situations.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

When it is apparent to the assistant/director that the centre's program, educators and/or space cannot accommodate the ongoing or future needs of a child currently enrolled in the centre, the matter will be referred to the Hester How board of directors. The procedure will include documenting meetings with families and any support services; and notification to our Children's Services consultant. In the event that the board considers a child's placement in the centre to be not appropriate for the needs of the child, the board reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any such child from the program with a month's written notice or, within a reasonable period of time.

If the parent(s) request(s) assistance and advice with respect to the appropriate referrals for the child's continued care and education, the centre's assistant/director, with the support of the local community and/or governmental agencies, will attempt to advise and suggest alternative placements and/or appropriate care.

Any child who has a history of aggression will be assessed by the assistant/director, resource staff and program educators to determine the centre's ability to control/change such behaviour.

If the educators are not able to manage the aggressive behaviours, and following our documentation and meetings with families and support services and a process of consultation and notification with our Children's Services consultant, resource consultant, the board of directors, the child may be withdrawn from the centre.

## **PROHIBITED PRACTICES**

The centre complies with the requirements of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, Ontario Regulation 137/15

48 No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates or at a premise where it oversees the provision of child care,

- (a) corporal punishment of a child;
- (b) physical restraint of a child, such as confining a child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and it is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision (unless such occurs during an emergency and child is supervised by an adult and such is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures);
- (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten a child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth,
- (e) depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on a child including making a child eat or drink against their will.

#### Behaviour Guidance

All behaviour guidance, if required, is done so as to help the child become self-disciplined, which is the essential goal of disciplining. Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

For the very young child, often redirection of the child's activities is the only form of discipline that is required. The educator is there to model the skills and the words that are needed to solve problems in a non-aggressive way. The first step with any discipline situation is to be sure that the child knows we care for him or her even though we do not approve of what (s)he is doing at the moment. Gradually the child will develop the language to deal with, and the ability to understand his/her conflict with others. In this way (s)he will learn to solve many difficulties by co-operating with other children and adults.

For older children we view discipline as a learning process which can be effectively accomplished in two steps:

1. The child is given clear warning so that (s)he can choose to stop the undesirable behaviour. For example, "If you throw sand at your friends you will have to leave the sandbox."
2. The discipline is an appropriate consequence of the action. For example, if the child throws sand again (s)he would be removed from the sandbox.

The emphasis in the centre is on the prevention of situations that require discipline. Educators always try to anticipate and defuse potentially difficult situations.

The educators are also aware that changes in a child's home life may affect his/her behaviour at the centre. We therefore attempt to communicate with each family on a daily basis, sharing any pertinent information about his/her child's day. The educators and the assistant/director are always available and are happy to discuss any issues or concerns the family feels his/her child may be experiencing, in order to assist and maintain a close relationship between home and the centre.

The educators recognize that children also learn from conflicts. They must, therefore, use their own judgment in allowing a child to solve some of his/her own problems if the situation is within the child's emotional, cognitive and physical ability to handle.

## **ADMISSION PERIOD**

We strongly recommend that parents make a real effort to spend as much time as possible in the centre to allow a gradual adjustment for each child to his/her new surrounding. It is wonderful for everyone if the child can visit a few times before the formal starting date. The younger your child is, the more likely the child and you will find the separation difficult. Occasionally a preschool child will find the separation difficult, and the educators are sensitive to this fact. Try to spend at least two to three days, even if it means using precious vacation time, in order to ensure a good experience for both you and your child.

For example: **Day #1** Bring your child in as arranged by the assistant/director and stay with him/her all the time, until your visit ends. Let him/her observe you interacting with other children and give the educators time to observe your child. Give your child time to get used to these new adults who will soon become part of his/her extended family.

**Day #2** Bring your child in at what would normally be your arrival time and stay until lunch time. If (s)he is comfortable, try to go and have a short coffee break, take a walk or spend time in our educator's lounge.

**Day #3** Spend the first hour with your child and then let your child know you are leaving but will return soon and then leave without any long good-byes. Come back right after nap time and spend another short time in the centre with your child's group.

A crying child will be comforted and cared for by the educators on a one to one basis. They understand the child's fears and the family's concerns. When you say goodbye to your child - say it with a big hug and kiss, and then go - the educators will respond to your child quickly if (s)he is upset as you leave.

One of the real assets in a workplace early learning centre is the proximity you have to your child. If you are close by you can come quickly if your child is ill. If your lunch hour corresponds to your child's lunchtime, you may wish to spend some of your time visiting or feeding your child, or participating in the program. Do not hesitate to be part of the program. Your child's educators will help you decide what may be a good time for a visit each day that corresponds with your child's schedule.

The educators welcome your visits, and while they too are busy, they enjoy sharing this time with you.

## **ARRIVAL AND PICK UP**

Infants and young children depend on regular arrival and departure hours for their own security. All children benefit from a specific contact between their parent and their educator in the morning. Please notify an educator of your child's arrival and departure.

No child will be released to any person other than a parent unless prior authorization is given to the centre staff. Written or emailed notice is preferred.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The centre operates year-round, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. It closes for all statutory and civic holidays, including Easter Monday, Remembrance Day, and other days on which City Hall closes. On Christmas Eve and New Years Eve the centre closes at 2:00 p.m. Parents are responsible for arranging alternate care on these days.

We request that your child arrives before 9:30 a.m. in order to take full advantage of the day's program. When your child is sick, late or will not be in that day, please call and inform the educators before 9:30 a.m. It is necessary for parents to pre-arrange back-up childcare for emergencies or illness. Children should be picked up no later than 5:45 p.m. Please notify the educators if your child is to be picked up earlier or later than usual.

## **LATE PICK UP POLICY**

Children should be picked up no later than 5:45 p.m. Families who are late picking up a child will be charged a late fee. The clock on the phone in the main office will determine the exact time as it is set to "Bell" time. After 5:40 p.m. children are to be picked up from the centre office. After 5:45 p.m. the following fees will apply:

A fee of \$10.00 will be imposed for the first 5 minutes, and, \$2.00 for each additional minute.

Late fees are due at the time of the late pick-up and families will be asked to sign our late book.

When it is not possible to immediately pay the late fee, the family will receive an invoice. The fees are payable within five days to the educator who was on duty with the late child, in recognition of their overtime.

If late fees are not paid within five days they will be subject to the same procedures as for the collection of overdue fees. This policy is meant to be a deterrent to the families and continual lateness may be subject to other action on the part of the centre.

For more information refer to the Emergency Procedures When a Child Is Not Picked Up.

## **HEALTH POLICIES**

The health policies of the centre take into consideration the responsibilities of working families, while maintaining the safest possible environment for the children.

In accordance with the Childcare and Early Years Act, a signed and fully documented Immunization Record and an Emergency Consent form must be presented by the child's first day of attendance. Subsequent immunizations given to the child must be promptly reported to the centre's assistant/director so that it may be recorded on the child's immunization record.

Families must keep a child at home who is suffering from vomiting, and/or diarrhea. If a child becomes ill during the day, his/her family will be notified and asked to pick him/her up as soon as possible. In a case where a child has had one or more bouts of diarrhea or vomiting (s)he may not return to the centre until his/her condition has been normal for twenty-four hours. Fever is very common in childhood. Most often, fever is caused by an infection, but it may also result from some other illness. Fever is not caused by teething. The degree (or height) of a fever does **not** tell you how serious the illness is, rather, the child's behaviour is generally the most important factor. A child with a mild infection could have a very high fever, while a child with a very severe infection might have no fever at all. Fever alone may not result in your child's exclusion from the centre. Your child may continue attending the facility if feeling well enough to take part in the activities. Your child has a fever when:

- the rectal temperature is 38°C (100.4°F) or higher
- the auxiliary (under the armpit) temperature is 37.3°C (99.1°F) or higher

**If your child has a temperature of 38.6°C (101.5°F) taken under the arm, s/he may not attend the centre as a fever usually indicates an infection. You will be asked to pick up your child from the centre and your child may return to the centre after s/he has been fever free for 24 hours (not just overnight) without the aid of medications, such as Tempra/Tylenol/ Advil or Motrin. It is important for you to contact your physician if your child's condition worsens.**

In addition, contact a physician if your child exhibits any of the following behaviours/symptoms:

- is excessively cranky, fussy or irritable
- is excessively sleepy, lethargic or unresponsive
- is persistently wheezing / coughing or has difficulty breathing
- has a rash and / or change in skin colour
- has any other signs of illness that worry you.

**NOTE:** Any child younger than 6 months of age with a fever **or** any child with a fever and any of the symptoms listed above **should not** attend the centre, and, if in attendance, **will be** sent home with the recommendation to be seen by a physician before continued attendance at the centre. Your child may return to the centre after your physician has made a diagnosis and started therapy, and if (s)he is feeling well enough to take part in activities.

Note: Child may return to the centre after fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever medication, e.g. Tempra, Tylenol, Advil, Motrin

(Source: Wellbeings, Canadian Paediatric Society)

Families should report a child's absence due to illness, each day that the child is to be away. Families should also report a child's exposure to a communicable disease (such as chicken pox, pertussis, measles, etc.). The child may attend the centre until (s)he shows symptoms of the disease. Families should be especially alert to any signs of illness in an exposed child, and should not send a child to the centre who seems at all unwell. The assistant/director will also post a note on the exit doors if any child in the centre has contracted a communicable disease, so that other parents can watch for symptoms. Please be sure to keep the centre informed and up to date about concerns you may have with respect to your child's health.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURE**

A family wishing his/her child to receive medication must complete a Medication Record. The information required includes date and dosage to be given, time(s) to be given, complete name of the medication and the parent's signature.

The educator administering the medication and a witness will also sign the form noting the times at which the medication was given.

Only those medications obtained through prescription, or by a doctor's note of a legally qualified medical practitioner, and in the original container, shall be administered to any child in attendance at the centre.

We also ask that the educator be informed of any medication given to the child before arrival at the centre, since even over the counter remedies may affect a child's behaviour.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for our educators to follow in order to deal with emergency situations while supporting the safety and well-being of everyone involved, resulting in the safest outcome possible.

Educators will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document in these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response;
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

Educators will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the centre, the initial Meeting Place to gather is outside the centre's Bay Street exits, in groups by the raised treed gardens.

If it is deemed Unsafe to Return to the centre, the evacuation site to proceed to is located at: Toronto Eaton Centre Child Care, 14 Trinity Square, 416-340-9651 (located diagonally across Bay Street from the centre, with the entrance being between the Marriott Hotel and Trinity Church.)

Note: All directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations other than those listed in this policy. For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations occur that are not described in this document, the director/assistant director, using their best judgement, will provide direction for the educators to follow for the immediate response and the next steps.

If any emergency situation results in a serious occurrence, the Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the director/assistant director.

In addition, for emergency preparedness, fire drills are practiced monthly and emergency bags are checked quarterly and supplies replenished, as needed.

Family emergency contact information is checked and updated as children transition between groups, or as required.

For more information, please see the document in its entirety titled *Emergency Management Policy and Procedures*.

Additionally, to ensure that families are immediately accessible in case of emergency, it is essential that the centre be notified immediately of any changes in home address, employment address, phone numbers, etc.

If for any reason a family member is not at his/her place of employment (i.e. meetings, etc.), (s)he is requested to make sure that someone at the place of his/her employment will have a number or an alternate means to ensure that s(he) can be reached. We ask that each family member arrange an alternate person(s) whom we can contact in an emergency if the parent is unavailable.

The centre uses accident/illness forms to report any illness or incident which results in an injury to a child. If your child has an accident it will be recorded, indicating all particulars of the occurrence and will be signed by the educator who cared for the child, and the assistant/director. The educator will ask you to sign the report then give you the original report and keep a copy for your child's file, and they will make every effort to discuss the occurrence with you. To protect the privacy of our families and children, in the event of an altercation between two or more children, a report to each child's families will be filled out, but in each report, the other child will remain anonymous.

## **FOOD/NUTRITION POLICY**

**Hester How Early Learning Centre strives to be a peanut/nut/allergen-safe centre. Nut-containing foods have been eliminated from our menus.**

Due to our anaphylaxis policy and our concerns about allergies, choking hazards and nutrition, no outside foods are to be brought into the centre by the parents. Families and children consuming food while travelling to or from the centre must do so outside of the premises of the centre/playground. The following exceptions may be made:

- Storage of milk and juice containers, labelled for an individual child and intended for the going home commute, will be permitted in program fridges.
- Infant room families may bring in food items to substitute for or supplement the menu (must be in original package or in a sealed **labelled** container and **nut-free**).
- Special dietary requests that we cannot provide on our menu (i.e. nutritional requests based on health, special need or religious requirements), once they have been reviewed by the assistant/director on an individual basis.
- Food items brought to field trips outside of the centre (please ensure that the food items you bring are **labelled** and **nut-free**).

Our lunches and morning/afternoon snacks are catered. Snacks, hot lunches, and beverages are provided for all but the youngest infants still on strained food and formula. Families of infants must provide their own formula, bottled beverage, infant cereal, strained food, etc.

The caterer's nutritionist reviews their four-week menu that is seasonally adjusted to ensure that top nutritional value is received by the children. The menu is posted in each program, and outside the kitchen for your easy reference. Copies of our current four-week menu are available by e-mail upon your request.

If your child has food allergies or is on a special diet, please notify the educators so that proper arrangements/substitutions can be made concerning meals.

For birthdays, a nut-free cake/loaf and frozen yogurt/ice cream is provided by the centre. The distribution of loot bags, candy, gift items, etc., amongst the children/cubbies, **is not** permitted. The distribution of cards (greeting, special occasion, invitation, etc.) amongst the children **is** permitted.

For graduations and "last day" celebrations, the regularly scheduled snack will be served. These celebrations will include a diploma, graduating hat, songs, photos, etc. Parents are welcome to attend.

## **ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY**

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be fatal. Hester How Early Learning Centre strives to create a safe and allergen free environment. While we recognize that factors beyond our control may contaminate our environment, we are not able to guarantee a 100% 'nut-free' (or other allergen-free) environment.

We live in a world that is contaminated with potential allergens. For an anaphylactic person, the key responsibility to avoiding allergens lies with the anaphylactic individual and their family. In the case of a very young anaphylactic child, the child care community must also be aware. Our approach is to regularly educate our community and solicit the cooperation of families, and to set in place procedures that are designed to safeguard the anaphylactic child.

In short, the risk of accidental exposure to an allergen has been significantly reduced, although it can never be completely removed. For more information please refer to the full Anaphylaxis Policy.

## **CLOTHING**

Each child's clothing should be clearly marked to prevent loss or confusion. It is suggested that mittens and gloves be fastened with clips or a long cord. Outdoor clothes should be removed by the parent upon arrival at the centre, and placed in the child's cubby. Infants need to have an alternate pair of shoes/slippers for indoor use as their outdoor shoes are not permitted in the playrooms.

To ensure that each child can play outdoors every day, it is essential that his/her clothing is adequate. Mittens, boots, etc., are necessary for inclement weather.



Because sudden changes in the weather can occur, especially in the spring and fall, an extra sweater or jacket left in the centre is advisable. Extra under-clothing should also be available.

It is always advisable to keep 2-3 extra changes of clothes at the centre for your child. During water play, when toilet training, or as a result of spills children may require more than one change in a day.

When the centre's clothing is loaned to enable a child to return home in dry clothing, the family is requested to wash it and return it to the centre as soon as possible.

We will try our best to see that clothing is not lost since we cannot be responsible if something is removed from your child's cubby. We are as careful as we can be to see that wet or soiled clothes, labelled with your child's name, are put in the proper cubby.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Generally the centre discourages children from bringing toys from home. These items may create conflicts among the children. No toy guns are allowed under any circumstances.

We make an exception, however, for toys or items which have special emotional significance for the child. Examples of such items are teddy bears, books or blankets which may help the child to sleep. Educators will also sometimes request that families bring in a toy from home as part of an organized curriculum activity (i.e. show and tell).

## **BLANKET AND SHEETS**

The centre will provide sheets for all cribs and cots. We ask, however, that each child be provided with a blanket from home, and that each family be responsible for the laundering of his/her own child's blanket. Educators will leave the blanket in your child's cubby every Friday for this purpose.

## **DIAPERS**

Parents are required to provide diapers for their children. Please ensure that an adequate supply is on hand at all times.

## **TOILET LEARNING**

An extra supply of labelled training pants/underwear/pants/socks must be provided for children who are in the toilet learning stage. Educators and families will work closely together to ensure that training is consistent. Please discuss any concerns or goals for your child with your child's support educator.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

We believe that field trips and community outings are an asset to our regular program for children from infants to six years. Families will be notified in advance of any trips for consent

and advised of any admission or other fees involved. Families are encouraged to assist in these activities by volunteering their time and/or giving suggestions. Please refer to our Family/Volunteer Policy.

Criteria for location of trips includes: plenty of available shaded areas for rest periods and for opportunity to play out of direct sunlight; conveniently located and adequately maintained washroom facilities; convenient access.

Areas to be avoided include: overcrowded destinations and areas that may contain hazards for young children (traffic, low walls or lack of walls/fencing, heavily littered areas, etc.)

Ratios for trips:	Infants:	1 adult for 3 children (short walking trip)
		1 adult for 2 children (full day walking trip)
	Toddlers:	1 adult for 5 children (short walking trip)
		1 adult for 3 children (full day walking trip)
	Preschool:	1 adult for 8 children (short walking trip)
		1 adult for 4 children (full day walking trip)
		1 adult for 2 children (when using TTC)
	Kindergarten:	1 adult for 10 children (short walking trip)
		1 adult for 5 children (full day walking trip)
		1 adult for 2-4 children (when using TTC)

For each group of children travelling together there will be one checklist with the names of all the children present, and it will be checked by the educators prior to and immediately following each transition.

Each child will wear a Hester How T-shirt/smock on every trip.

All families who sign up for trips are advised that they are considered in the adult ratio and in order for the trip to take place, parents who have to cancel should arrange for an alternate in their place.

The educators will take along accident forms and adequately stocked first aid kits and at least one regular full-time educator will be on each trip. Emergency I.D. cards for the children are carried with the group's first aid kit. The educators will remind parents to keep their emergency information on file up to date and will review safety guidelines and expectations with older children prior to each trip.

## **FAMILY MEETINGS**

There will be group family meetings from time to time to discuss various areas of each program. Families are encouraged to attend these meetings, since they are necessary for communicating important information and allow room for family involvement in decision making. While we will try to schedule meetings during noon hours, since we are aware that many parents live far from the centre, evening meetings may sometimes be necessary.

The Annual General Meeting is held once a year, usually in May/June, to determine overall policy matters and to elect new members to the Board of Directors. This meeting is generally held at 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.

Family interviews may be arranged with your child's educator or the centre's assistant/director, at any time, upon your request.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Meetings of the board of directors, which are open to all families and educators, generally occur at lunch time, once a month. Reminders of upcoming meetings are noted in the monthly newsletter, emailed around the first of each month.

This group is the policy and decision-making body for the centre. If families are interested in knowing, or learning, more about this aspect of the centre, the centre's by-laws and a description of the key responsibilities of the board of directors are available for reading.

The board of directors provides representation that will ensure that the various points of view of all groups will be considered when policies are established or changed.

## **FAMILY - EDUCATOR INVOLVEMENT**

All members of the corporation (families and educators) are encouraged to join standing committees maintained by the board of directors, as required.

The centre can only be as good as the members of the corporation want it to be. To ensure that it meets the goals and concerns of both families and educators, all members are encouraged to give their time and participate in any special activities that the educators carefully plan for the children, especially outings and/or celebrations), as well as activities organized by the board of directors or by the standing committees.

Some of the benefits derived from spending some time with the children at the centre, or on trips, are:

- families get a first hand look at what their children do when they are away from home and can have a little fun themselves; and,
- families develop a better understanding of what their children need on trip days and what takes place on these trips. This, in turn, helps the educators to organize the children for the trips more efficiently and gives families greater peace of mind when they're not able to accompany their child's group on a trip day.

## **FAMILY ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Families are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing within our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive inter actions among the children, families and child care educators, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with families about the program and their children. Our educators are available to engage families in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction. All issues and concerns raised by families are taken seriously by the educators of Hester How Early Learning centre and every effort will be made to address and resolve all issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible. Issues/concerns may be brought forward

verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the family will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved. An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to a family within two (2) business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

For more information, please see the document in its entirety titled, *Family Issues and Concerns Policies and Procedures*, as an attachment at the end of this Handbook.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The following policies and procedures have been developed, adopted and are followed to ensure a safe, welcoming environment for all children, families and educators of Hester How:

- Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Behaviour Guidance Policy & Procedures
- By-Laws
- Child Abuse Policy and Procedures
- Children of Educator Policy
- Confidentiality of Information Policy
- Educator Guidelines for Deescalating Volatile Situations
- Educator Handbook
- Educator Involvement in Disputes Policy
- Emergency Fire Evacuation Policy
- Emergency Management Policy
- Emergency Proc When Child Not Picked Up
- Family Guardian Volunteer Policy
- Family Handbook
- Family Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures
- Financial Management Policy
- Health & Sanitary Practices Policy
- HR Anti-Harassment Discrimination Policy
- Incident Investigation & Conflict Resolution Policy
- Late Pick Up Policy
- Medical needs CHCP
- Medication Policy
- Monitoring Compliance and Contraventions
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Playground Safety Policy
- Playground Supervision Guidelines
- Police Reference Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening Policy
- Program Statement
- Program Statement Monitoring
- Prohibited Practices Policy
- Safe Drinking Water Policy
- Safety procedures/Counting and Accountability
- Scented Products Policy
- Self-Regulation Policy
- Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures
- Sleep Monitoring Policy and Schedule
- Student Info Handbook

- Student/Volunteer Supervision Policy
- Sun Safety/Smog Alert Policy
- Training and development Policy
- Workplace Anti-Harassment Policy
- Workplace Anti-Violence Policy

Some of these have been included in this handbook, in full or abbreviated form. All policies and procedures are available from the office, emailed to enrolled families and are also posted on the main bulletin board outside the office.

We wish to draw your attention to the City of Toronto's Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) which prescribes clear expectations, service standards for all child care providers who have a service contract with the City. It also serves as a self-evaluation and planning tool for operators and educators. The validated tool is used by the Quality Assurance Unit to assess quality in early learning programs. The results of the "snap shot" of the AQI visit are posted on the Children's Services web site and we encourage families to discuss the results with us.

In addition, the AQI highlights the following Hester How documents which families are required to review prior to admission to the centre:

- Access, Equity & Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures
- Child Abuse Policy
- Family/Guardian Volunteer Policy
- Health and Sanitary Practices Policy
- Philosophy Statement
- Program Statement
- Sleep Policy
- Wait List and Enrolment Policies and Priorities
- Withdrawal Procedure

## **MINISTRY INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDCARE & LICENSING**

The Ontario government is committed to increasing transparency and family access to information about licensed child care programs across the province.

The licensing inspection conducted at this child care centre includes an inspection summary of requirements and recommendations, showing how well the centre did on the date of inspection and is posted on the main office bulletin board.

The centre is given clear instructions on any non-compliances or recommendations and how to meet requirements.

We encourage you to speak to the assistant/director for an explanation of the inspection findings. The operator can show you the detailed inspection report.

More information about child care and licensing is available on the Ministry of Education web site at [www.ontario.ca/licensedchildcare](http://www.ontario.ca/licensedchildcare). Questions or complaints to the Ministry can be made by calling 1-877-510-5333 or by emailing [childcare\\_ontarion@Ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontarion@Ontario.ca).

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you want to know more about the centre, the assistant/director and educators welcome your questions. Once your child is enrolled, the educators in all of our programs, and specifically the support educator assigned to your child, will discuss with you his/her progress when completing the Nipissing District Developmental Screening Tool.

We invite and encourage you to ask the educators about the program and/or any matters of concern to you. If families wish to discuss their child's progress or adjustment in greater detail than is possible during normal program times, they are welcome to arrange an appointment with the educator.

As new policies are developed or when the Family Handbook is modified, the revised version will be added to the policy binder once it has been approved by the board of directors.

Hester How Early Learning Centre  
**Family Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures**

Reviewed: September 2017

Approved by Board of Directors: October 17, 2017

## **Policy**

Families are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, families and child care educators, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with families about the program and their children. Our educators are available to engage families in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by families are taken seriously by the educators of Hester How Early Learning Centre and every effort will be made to address and resolve all issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the family will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to a family within two (2) business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

## **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of families, children, educators, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

## **Conduct**

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point any family member or educator feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Director/ Assistant Director.

## **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a family member expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, that family member will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

## **Background**

This procedure encourages a person who has an issue/complaint to make every effort to discuss the issue/complaint directly with the person involved. If the person is uncomfortable or unsure about how to proceed, they may consult with the Assistant/ Director of the centre or the president of the board.

## **Definition**

An issue/complaint may involve a complaint about the centre, its operation, the program or the conduct of educators, students, volunteers or families. The person complaining may be a family member, educator, student or another person or organization.

## **Procedure**

1. All issue/complaints will be investigated in accordance with the "Complaints Procedure" in Appendix 1 of this policy.
2. An issue/complaint Report, provided in Appendix 2 of this policy shall be filled out for all incidents.
3. The subject of any issue/complaint will be informed of the details of the incident and have an opportunity to respond.
4. All meetings and notes involving issue/complaint will be kept confidential and records will be kept in a separate and confidential file.
5. Where an issue/complaint requires further investigation, action or discipline: the report may be disclosed for that purpose at the discretion of the Assistant/Director.
6. Once resolved, to the satisfaction of the Assistant/Director, both parties shall sign the Issue /Complaint Report. (provided in Appendix 2 of this policy)
7. Where an issue/complaint is unresolved and further action is required, then the Assistant/Director will consult with the executive committee of the board of directors.



8. Where involved, if the board of directors needs to provide any further direction on any further action, any discussions shall take place in-camera.
9. Incidents/complaints that have their own procedures are excluded from this policy and are dealt with through their own procedures; e.g. Behaviour Guidance, Child Abuse, Serious Occurrence, Staff Grievances. Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

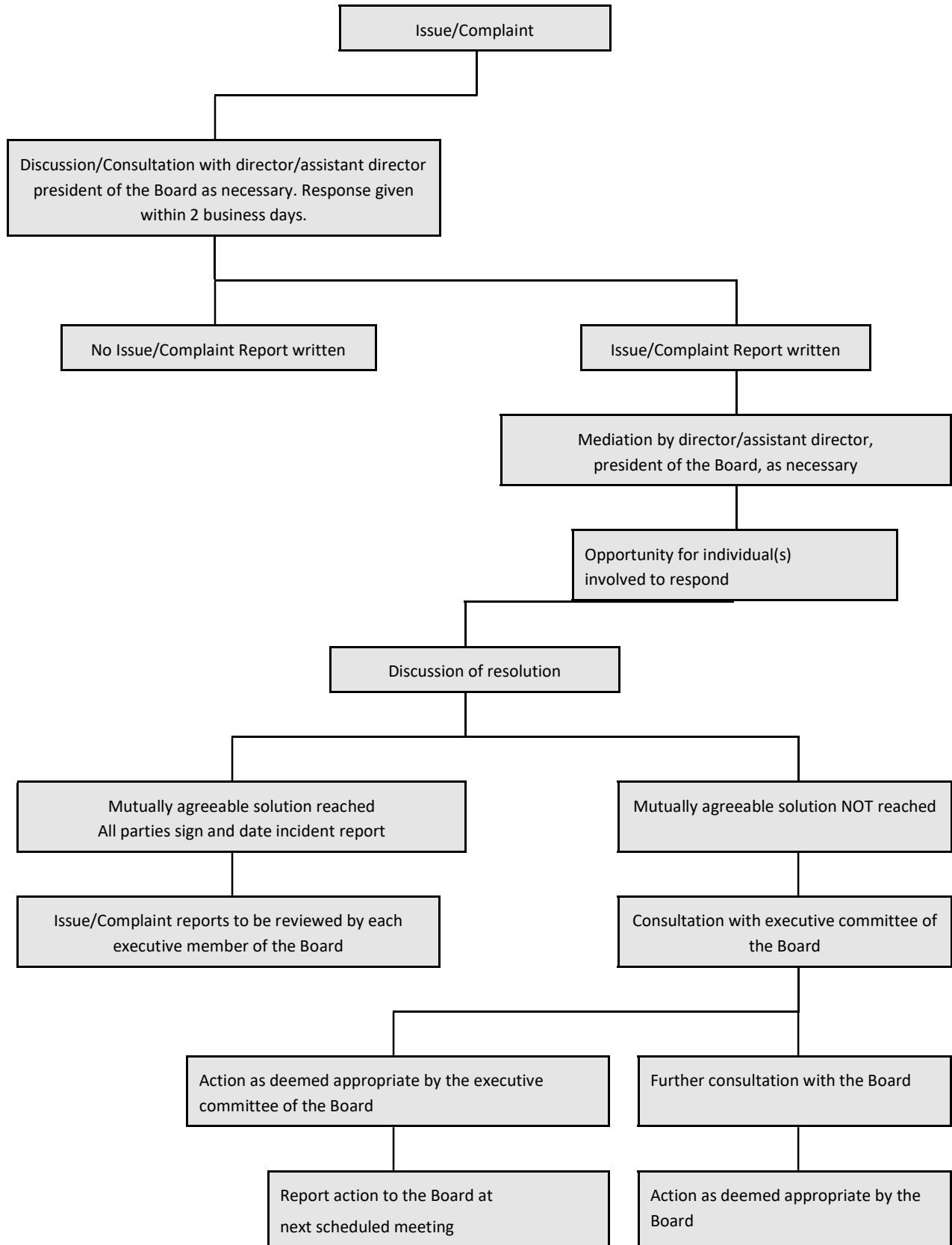
### **Application of this Policy**

- 1 The Assistant/Director or president will attempt to assist the parties to resolve the issue/complaint and ensure the details of the issue/complaint are heard by both parties and offer suggestions regarding the resolution of the dispute. A response will be given within (2) business days.
- 2 All are resolved in a timely manner.
- 3 Any meetings should be held in a private place, such as the board room, and should not be discussed in other rooms or hallways where there are other families, educators or children.
- 4 All possible resolutions should be discussed and explored.

### **Contacts:**

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Desk: 1-877-510-5333  
College of Early Childhood Educators 416 961 8558  
Ministry of Labour 1-877-202-0008  
Children's Aid Society 416-924-4646  
Catholic Children's Aid Society 416-395-1500  
Jewish Family and Child Service 416-638-7800  
Native Child and Family Services 416-969-7800  
Ingrid Ivis 416 392 7981/416 617 7695  
Debra Jagdeo-Sammy 416 392 7981/ 647 284 4596

**Appendix 1: Issue/Complaint Procedure**



**Appendix 2:**

**HESTER HOW EARLY LEARNING CENTRE  
Issue/Complaint REPORT**

This form is confidential when completed.

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Report completed by:	Date: ____ M ____ D ____ Y
Position:	Signature:
Description of incident:	
Time of incident:	Location of incident:
Action taken/Response:	
Who was notified and when?	
Resolution proposed/Further follow-up required?	
Print Name:	Print Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:
Assistant/Director/ President Signature _____	Date : M ____ D ____ Y