



# **WHPS**

# **Great Beginnings**

# **Program Handbook**

**September 2023**

## **WHPS GREAT BEGINNINGS PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

### **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The WHPS Great Beginnings Program is a play-based program which provides learners with a range of activities to explore and meet individual developmental needs through play and interaction with their environment. The Great Beginnings program will strive to meet the physical, social, intellectual, creative and emotional needs of the children in attendance as follows:

- ❖ **Physical Needs**
  - The program will allow for the development of fine, gross and perceptual motor skills; providing a variety of kinesthetic play opportunities
- ❖ **Social Needs**
  - The program will allow for the development of positive interactions between peers and within groups. Children will be encouraged to learn cooperation, sharing and resolving differences through role modelling, games, stories and prosocial skill centres
- ❖ **Intellectual Needs**
  - The program will encourage the development of thinking skills, verbal skills, listening skills and observational skills.
- ❖ **Creative Needs**
  - The program will allow for the development of creativity by allowing children to play imaginatively and encouraging them to use all of their senses in play and learning.
- ❖ **Emotional Needs**
  - This program will allow for the development of positive relationships, decision-making skills, expression of feelings and respecting the feelings of others. Zones of Regulation theory will be introduced to learners and parents as a common language for feelings and how they can be understood and regulated.

The WHPS Great Beginnings Program will:

- ❖ Provide a well-rounded program closely supervised by qualified instructors.
- ❖ Provide a diverse program that recognizes each child as a unique person with individual strengths.
- ❖ Show respect for others regardless of race, color, gender, religion or national origin.
- ❖ Encourage students to develop and provide service to the community that will enhance their quality of life,

- ❖ Meet a variety of individual and group needs.
- ❖ Provide an opportunity for parents to be involved in their child's early childhood education.
- ❖ Focus on the needs of students:
 

We will focus on the whole child in our curriculum; meeting their developmental goals and milestones through co-education learning and the play model in the curriculum. This will meet their physical, social, intellectual, creative, and emotional needs. Anything that is not reached through the program will be flagged for adaptations and modifications with experienced, licensed staff such as an SLP or OT.

## **CURRICULUM INFORMATION**

The WHPS Great Beginnings program will follow the *Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta*. This framework, completed in 2014, identifies the child as the *Mighty Learner* and calls on educators to notice and name the following learning dispositions:

- ❖ Playing, creating, inventing, imagining
- ❖ Seeking, asking, exploring with all or some of their senses
- ❖ Participating with others, observing what others are doing, or listening and sharing ideas and opinions
- ❖ Persisting with challenges and difficulties with ideas and with others (pg. 47-48).

“An early learning and child care curriculum framework is different than a traditional curriculum. In early childhood, curriculum is focused on broad holistic goals rather than specific outcomes for each subject area. Early learning and child care curriculum frameworks embrace children’s everyday experiences as the sources of curriculum meaning making. Early childhood educators use the goals in the curriculum framework to describe and interpret children’s everyday experiences. In early childhood, curriculum content is integrated, emerging from children’s fascination with the world. When educators notice children’s interest in exploring nature, people, places, and objects as well as print, stories, numbers, shapes, and patterns, and when they name the connections between these experiences and early literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, music, and art, they are co-constructing early learning curriculum with young children and making the curriculum visible to others” (p. 12).

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- ❖ Children entering the Great Beginnings program must be three years of age and typical students must be toilet trained.
- ❖ Students who turn three between the first day of the school year and December 31st may join the day they turn three.
- ❖ All children's belongings should be labeled with their name.
- ❖ Children must bring an extra pair of shoes that will be used as "inside shoes". Non marking soles are required.
- ❖ Children must have appropriate outdoor weather clothing. There will be outside play times unless conditions are extremely adverse.
- ❖ Licensing policy directs us to have a sign in/sign out sheet. When a child is brought to Great Beginnings or leaves Great Beginnings, the parent/guardian must sign the child in and out.
- ❖ Children should not arrive at Great Beginnings earlier than 10 minutes before class begins and should not be picked up later than 10 minutes after class.
- ❖ If the weather is extreme and buses are not running to the schools, Great Beginnings will remain open. Transportation to the Great Beginnings program is at the discretion of the parents.
- ❖ The Great Beginnings program may visit locations in the community to explore the environment, experience the different spaces, and encourage students to seek and wonder about new places. These locations may include the Public Library, bakery, fire station, EMS, police station, etc. Community members may be invited into the classroom throughout the school year.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

- ❖ Parents are not expected to volunteer in the program, however they are welcome upon invitation from the teacher. If parents are interested in volunteering, they must have their criminal record check with the vulnerable sector check as well as a child intervention check on file at the school office. The following is a list of duties parents may engage in during program hours.
  - Arrive 15 minutes early.
  - Make sure your handbag, purse, etc. is out of reach of the children.
  - Familiarize yourself with the room, allergy list, and fire escape plan.
  - Help set-up centers.
  - Ask the instructor if there is anything specific you need to do
  - Help set-up creative activity materials for the day. Allow each child to explore the materials independently. Children benefit from a creative experience without limits of expected outcomes.

- Help with supervision keeping in mind the discipline policy and that each child is deserving of respect. Feel free to step in and correct any situation that requires intervention, however, discipline is the responsibility of the Great Beginnings staff.
- Make sure no child leaves the classroom unsupervised.
- Interact with the children by playing, reading to, and talking with them. Spend time with all the children and try to call them by name.
- Encourage children to clean up after themselves and to be more independent by dressing themselves, printing their own name, etc.
- Take time to help a child in need (ie. tying shoes), as you would want another parent to do for your child.
- Clean up spills and messes as they occur, but please leave the main sweeping and mopping of floors until after class time. Supervise the children washing their hands before eating.
- Clean tables with disinfectant before and after children eat.
- Parent helper is to accompany the group on all outings for walks, etc. Help children to get their shoes, jackets, etc. on or off.
- When supervising outdoor play, one supervisor must always monitor the climbing/sliding equipment. The other supervisors shall position themselves so they can see the entire area where children are playing.
- In case of an accident requiring emergency care or an incident that requires the instructor's attention, you must supervise the class while the instructor deals with the child. In case of an emergency evacuation, follow the exit plan as posted in the classroom.
- Absolutely NO smoking or vaping permitted at any time, including field trips.

## STAFFING INFORMATION

### Staff Child Ratio

- ❖ The maximum ratio of the playschool will not exceed 12:1. 12 children to 1 adult.

### Staff Orientation

- ❖ Staff will have a yearly meeting to go over the program's administrative policies, procedures, and curricular expectations.
- ❖ Monthly and weekly meetings will be held with GB staff, to discuss any issues, including IPP's and programming.

### Staff and Volunteer Screenings

- ❖ All staff and volunteers will have their criminal records check and child intervention checks. These documents must be dated no earlier than 6 months prior to the date of commencement but within 8 weeks of starting their job and be updated every three years from that date.

### Staffing Criteria, Roles, and Responsibilities

- ❖ The Great Beginnings program may be instructed by or overseen by a Child Care Supervisor whose qualifications abide with Alberta Children's Services regulations.
  - The Child Care Supervisor responsibilities will include:
    - providing weekly program planning
    - developing daily program goals and objectives
    - updating registration and contact information of students
    - updating monthly attendance and filing into *Attendance binder* in the classroom
    - creating a monthly newsletter
    - reporting any incidents to the school administrator and working with the administrator to report to the licensing agency
    - Carrying out the role and responsibilities of a Child Care Worker (see below) at their assigned Great Beginnings program when a Child Care Worker is not available.
- ❖ WHPS Great Beginnings will be staffed with a Child Care Worker in the role of instructor and under the supervision of a Child Care Supervisor.
- ❖ The Great Beginnings instructor must have Child Care Worker certification or qualifications that abide with Alberta Children's Services Regulations. The instructor's responsibilities include:
  - aiding in the development of the daily program goals and objectives
  - supervising children during program hours

- program implementation, supervision of and guiding of children in a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day.
- collaboration with the Child Care Supervisor and Inclusive Education Lead to ensure that the diverse needs of the learners are being addressed.
- reporting any incidents to the Child Care Supervisor
- organizing, developing, and preparing materials for the GB program
- maintaining a safe, welcoming, respectful, and caring environment
- monitoring child growth and development
- maintaining communication with families
- maintaining daily records (attendance, medication, etc)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Fees**

- ❖ Parents/guardians must pay fees of \$12/day for each child registered. The registration fee can be paid in full or alternate arrangements can be made with the school.
- ❖ Government subsidy may be available. Staff from Whispering Hills Primary School will communicate with parents regarding available access to funding.
- ❖ We request that once parents/guardians have made arrangements for a specific day(s) of attendance that those arrangements be adhered to for an entire semester. Parents/guardians will be charged for days that children are absent.

### **Child Discipline Policy**

- ❖ The Great Beginnings Program uses guidance strategies that are prevention oriented and facilitate desirable behavior. Clear, consistent limits will be set for desirable behavior, with simple and straightforward explanations. If the reasons for the limits are understood, children are more likely to abide by them. Limits will be set in a positive way, focusing on what to do, rather than what not to do; thus giving children guidance.
- ❖ Physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation is not allowed. Staff must not deny or threaten to deny a basic necessity such as a drink or bathroom break. We will not use any form of physical retrain, confinement or isolation as a form of punishment.
- ❖ Appropriate behavior will be acknowledged with words and gestures. Positive reinforcement builds self-confidence and encourages a repeat of desired behavior. Behavior will be focused on rather than the child, to promote positive guidance.
- ❖ Focusing on the behavior, rather than the child, in a negative situation prevents lowered self-esteem and hurt feelings. Acknowledging the desired behavior after an incident will also reinforce the positive objective; for example, saying "Thank you for picking up the toy" when a child has done what was asked.
- ❖ Our intention is designed to provide supportive guidance rather than to be punitive.

- ❖ Children will be approached individually by name and their attention obtained. A reminder will be used to clarify and reinforce limits. Great Beginnings students can become easily distracted, so reminders will be given often.
- ❖ If the behavior continues, distraction, diversion or substitution may be appropriate and will give children an opportunity to choose, thus encouraging the desired behavior.
- ❖ Persistent refusal to abide by the rules may require that the child move with the instructor to a centre or space in the classroom that will allow them privacy to explore the feelings underlying the behaviour. Once the child has regulated, he or she will be commended and will resume activities under the caring eye of the instructor.
- ❖ If the incident involves more than one child, opportunity will be provided for the children to restore relationships after the incident. The goal is to help children learn that making amends requires time and goodwill rather than revenge.
- ❖ We recognize each child is an individual and each situation is different; therefore, each shall be treated accordingly. All discipline will be reasonable within the circumstance.

### **Behaviour Management Policy**

- ❖ In certain situations, and in cases where regular discipline procedures (see Child Discipline Policy) are not effective, the Behavior Management Policy will be followed. To ensure that all children receive equal program time, any overly disruptive behavior will be dealt with accordingly. This is a confidential process between the child, parents, instructor and the principal.
- ❖ If behaviour concerns persist, staff will discuss these with the parent. It will be left to the staff's discretion to determine if the behaviour poses a threat to the child or other children in the class. In such a case, the instructor would consult with the Child Care Supervisor, Inclusive Education Lead, the Licencing Officer and parent(s) to explore appropriate supports and programming to assist the child.
- ❖ Parents may agree to a medical referral or behaviour assessment by a contract psychologist. An additional dedicated staff member may be hired to work directly with the student in the classroom allowing his or her learning to safely continue.
- ❖ Behavior issues and concerns will be documented and kept by the program staff.

### **Potential Health Risk**

- ❖ Where a staff member or playschool facility has reason to believe that a child is suffering from a potential health risk to other children such as flu, coughing, fever or any other contagious infection or disease or shows signs of coming down with a

potential health risk such as being flushed, sweaty, lethargic, pale, irritable or drowsy, the instructor will make every effort to contact a parent/guardian or emergency contact.

- ❖ The child's parent/guardian will then be asked to come and pick up the child from the premises immediately.
- ❖ All steps from the time the child is observed will be documented and signed off by the parent upon removing the child from the premises.
- ❖ The child will be kept at home until symptoms are no longer observed for at least 24 hours.

### **Supervised Care for Sick Children/Accident/Serious Illness Policy**

- ❖ If a child becomes ill at Great Beginnings, staff will ensure that a space separate (with adult supervision) from the other children is provided along with a mat and blanket. The child will be made as comfortable as possible until the parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child.
- ❖ In case of serious illness, staff will contact the parent or emergency contact immediately and will follow their instructions for proceeding to the doctor.
- ❖ Documentation must include the name of the child, the date the child was observed to be ill, name of staff member who identified the child, time the parent/guardian was contacted, name of staff who contacted the parent, and time the child was removed from and returned to the program.
- ❖ In case of an accident, the child will be tended to by staff, and parents/guardians will be notified if necessary. Accidents will be recorded using the Aspen View e-form system. These recorded documents will be reviewed by administration.

### **Emergency Procedures Policy**

- ❖ While in Whispering Hill Primary School (WHPS), Great Beginnings staff will be briefed on emergency procedures by the principal. Staff will inform students of emergency procedures and they will practice these procedures randomly throughout the year. Parents will also be informed. All parents will be contacted regarding actual emergencies or drills.

### **Offsite Emergency and Evacuation Policy**

- ❖ Parents will be advised, in the form of a permission slip, of any field trips where students will be leaving the school. The permission slip will contain information regarding the activity, its location, transportation, and supervision arrangements. Parents must consent, in writing, to allow their child to attend. Parents must make alternate arrangements for any children not attending the offsite activity. In the event of an offsite activity or an emergency evacuation, staff must take an emergency binder containing records with them.

### **Incident Reporting Policy**

- ❖ Licensed staff will be notified immediately in the event of an emergency evacuation, the program being closed due to an emergency, an intruder on the premises, a child being removed from the playschool without parent/guardian consent, an injury requiring medical attention, a lost child or a child left at school after operating hours, death, injury, allegation of abuse, error in the administration of medication or a young person involved in crime.
- ❖ Any statements regarding serious incidents will be reported to the principal as soon as possible, and must be documented using a prescribed form.
- ❖ The annual summary and Analysis Report will be completed and submitted to licensing staff at the end of each calendar year.

### **Administration of Medication Policy**

- ❖ In case of an emergency, medication for things such as asthma or allergies, the medication must be administered by staff.
- ❖ Medication may be administered at the school once the parent/guardians have completed the “Release for Administration of Medication” form.
- ❖ All medication left at the school office, must be in the original labeled container clearly labeled with the child's name. The medication will only be administered per label instructions.
- ❖ Emergency Medications – i.e. epi-pen, insulin; will be stored in a location that will be inaccessible to the children. Any medication administered to a child will be documented to include the name of the medication, the time of administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who administered the medication and acknowledged via signature by the parent.
- ❖ For less serious illnesses, any medications required must be administered by a parent before or after the GB class. In case the medication would have to be administered during the 3 hours of GB, the parent will be allowed to come in and administer the medication. If the child is on medication, this will be reported to GB staff in writing, and kept in the emergency records binder. Where medication must be administered to a child, the name of the medication, time of administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who administered the medication will be recorded.

### **Health Care Policy**

- ❖ Staff may provide or allow for the provision of health care to a child only if the written consent of the child's parent or guardian has been obtained.
- ❖ Staff and volunteers may provide health care that is first aid.
- ❖ In the case of an emergency, the principal or staff will act in the best interest of the student, with or without parental consent.

### **Smoking Policy**

- ❖ Smoking is not allowed on school property premises anywhere that the children are being supervised (i.e. playground, field trips).

### **Nutrition Policy**

- ❖ A nutrition break will be given approximately 1 hour after Great Beginnings has begun.
- ❖ Parents are expected to provide their children with a healthy snack that is manageable in size. Please do not send lunches.

### **Administrative Records Policy**

- ❖ Children attending Great Beginnings must be signed in and signed out every day of attendance. The parent or staff signing in the child must state the time they arrived and the time they departed from school. They must also provide staff with a contact phone number for the specific day.
- ❖ The sign-in book will be placed near the entrance of the classroom.
- ❖ Staff certification and current first aid must be in a visible area for parents to view.

### **Portable Records Policy**

- ❖ The school will maintain, in a portable file, emergency information for each child. This will include the child's name, date of birth, and home address. It will also include the parent/guardian name, home address and telephone number; as well as the emergency contact's name, address and telephone number. All relevant health information must be included.
- ❖ The portable record should also contain local emergency numbers and the number for the poison control center. Portable records should remain with staff on each field trip and in the case of an emergency evacuation.

### **Non-Portable Records Policy**

- ❖ The school will keep an up-to-date record for each child on the following:
  - Each child's name, date of birth and home address
  - A completed registration form
  - Parent's/guardian's name, home address and telephone number
  - Emergency contact's name, address, and telephone number
  - Child's health information provided by parent/guardian
  - Information regarding health care provided to child while in school with the parent's/guardian's written consent
  - These records will remain on school premises.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

Emergency evacuation procedures will be used in case of:

- ❖ Fire
- ❖ Chemical or hazardous materials accident inside the center
- ❖ Suspected natural gas leak

Emergency evacuation procedures may be used in situation such as:

- ❖ Bomb threat
- ❖ Threatening behavior inside the building
- ❖ A health related emergency such as utility failure or sewage back up

Procedures:

1. Gather children
2. Staff take the required information and supplies
3. Evacuate the premise immediately via the nearest, closest, safe exit.
4. Last adult out, scans the room, closes and latches the door but does not lock it.
5. Take attendance in the assembly area outside the building.
6. Do not enter the building unless directed to by emergency personnel.

### **Supervision Policy**

- ❖ The Great Beginnings staff responsibilities will include supervision of the children's play and behavior.
- ❖ Staff will ensure that the classroom and outdoor play areas are safe for the children at all times. If the area is deemed unsafe, the children are to be escorted to a safe location and the appropriate authorities notified by staff.
- ❖ Attendance will be taken before leaving for any class outings and again once arriving at the destination. The process will be repeated when the group is leaving the destination.

**Policy Awareness**

- ❖ All policies in this booklet are to be read, and understood by parents/guardians. There will be a form in the registration package that is to be signed, that states that each parent has read and understood the information in this booklet.

WHPS Great Beginnings Incident Report Form (SAMPLE)

Staff Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Incident: behavior   medical   intruder   child removal   injury   child lost/left

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of staff member who witnessed incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of contact with parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident:

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Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



After reading through the 2023-24 WHPS Great Beginnings Handbook, please complete and sign this page.

After signing, please email a signed copy to [amber.guay@asperview.org](mailto:amber.guay@asperview.org) or turn in a paper copy to Mrs. Guay within the first 2 weeks of the school year.

Parent name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

WHPS Great Beginnings student(s) name(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read and understand the WHPS Great Beginnings Handbook. I am aware of the policies and procedures in place for the Great Beginnings program that my child will attend for the 2023-24 school year.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_