

Gulf Islands Early Learning Society

Policies

(2007 consolidation, amended by board of directors on 30 October 2013)

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Definitions

“guardian” means a person sixteen years of age or older who is registered with Salt Spring Early Learning Centre as a guardian.

1. Application for Registration

Policy:

- 1.1 A parent or guardian applying to register his or her child for a space at the Salt Spring Early Learning Centre must complete the “Application for Registration” form.
 - 1.2 A non-refundable application fee of \$50.00 per child is payable upon submission of the completed “Application for Registration” form.
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2. Registration and *Society Act* Membership

Policy:

- 2.1 The following steps must be completed before Salt Spring Early Learning Centre registers a child:
 - (a) the Centre must have an available space;
 - (b) the Centre has accepted a parent or guardian’s application for registration and payment of the non-refundable application fee;
 - (c) the Centre has received the signed parent or guardian contract, and the approved subsidy application (where applicable);
 - (d) the Centre has received payment of the first month’s fees;
 - (e) the Centre has received a deposit in the amount of one half-month’s fees;
 - (f) the Centre has received the annual membership fee required under the *Society Act*;
 - (g) the Centre has received the child’s immunization record; and

- (h) the enrolling parent or guardian has attended an orientation session for new families.
 - 2.2 The board of directors or manager has discretion to decline to accept an application.
 - 2.3 The manager shall maintain a register of members of the Gulf Islands Early Learning Society as required by the *Society Act*.
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3. First Month

Preamble:

During a child's first week of attendance, our staff will encourage a parent or guardian to stay with the child at the Early Learning Centre for an appropriate period, in order to provide a gradual entry into our program. Gradual entry helps the child become accustomed to the Early Learning Centre environment with the security of a parent or guardian, and helps the parent or guardian become familiar with our staff and program. During the first month, our staff will assess the suitability of our program for the child.

Policy:

- 3.1 A child's admission to the Early Learning Centre begins with a gradual entry, as agreed upon between staff and the parent or guardian.
 - 3.2 Each child will be subject to a probationary basis for a one month period, during which time the Early Learning Centre will review the suitability of the its program for the child.
 - 3.3 Before the end of the first month, the Early Learning Centre shall advise the parent or guardian if any concerns prevent the child's continued attendance.
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4. Payment of Fees

Preamble:

Salt Spring Early Learning Centre is a non-profit society, and depends heavily on early learning fees to meet financial obligations. When fees are not paid, or not paid on time, the Centre cannot meet its expenses. Parents and guardians will be asked to make other arrangements if they do not pay their fees as required.

Policy:

(a) Monthly Fees

- 4.1 Monthly fees are payable in advance, and must be paid by the due date.
- 4.2 The due date is the first business day of each month.
- 4.3 Monthly fees are based on booked days, not attendance, therefore a parent or guardian is responsible for monthly fees whether or not a child attends the Salt Spring Early Learning Centre, and reductions to monthly fees are not available when a booked day falls on sick days or statutory holidays.
- 4.4 Fees will not be reduced in the event the manager closes the Early Learning Centre due to inclement weather, power outage or related conditions.
- 4.5 A parent or guardian who provides one full calendar month's notice (beginning on the first day of the month) of temporary withdrawal for family vacation will have monthly fees reduced by 25% for the period of temporary withdrawal.
- 4.6 A parent or guardian who does not pay monthly fees in full on the due date will not be permitted to bring a child to the Early Learning Centre until all outstanding fees are paid, and no notice is required.
- 4.7 The board of directors may discontinue service where monthly fees are not paid in full on the due date more than twice in a calendar year.

(b) "Drop-in" Fees

- 4.8 Fees for "drop-in" service are payable per occurrence, and must be paid in advance.

(c) Separated Parents or Guardians

- 4.9 Where separated parents or guardians are both paying fees, the enrolling parent or guardian will be responsible for payment of fees, and the Early Learning Centre will provide all fee invoices to the enrolling parent or guardian.

(d) NSF Cheques

- 4.10 Salt Spring Early Learning Centre charges a fee of \$50.00 for all NSF cheques to cover bank charges and our administrative costs.

5. Withdrawal by Parents or Guardians

Policy:

- 5.1 One full calendar month's notice (beginning on the first business day of the month), or one month's payment in lieu of notice, is required if a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw a child.
 - 5.2 The deposit paid upon registration is credited towards the last month's fees.
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6. Hours of Operation

Policy:

- 6.1 Salt Spring Early Learning Centre is open on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except on statutory holidays, during Christmas break (which starts from the close of business on December 23rd and extends through to the new year) and when weather forces closure of the Centre.
 - 6.2 In the event of inclement weather, power outage or related conditions, the manager may close the Centre, and parents and guardians will be contacted to collect their children.
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7. Contact Information

Preamble:

Salt Spring Early Learning Centre must be able to reach a parent or guardian at all times, and requires accurate and current contact information.

Policy:

- 7.1 Parents and guardians must report any changes to contact information immediately, including change of address, telephone number, employer or family composition.

8. Arrival

Policy:

(a) *Accompanying Child into the Early Learning Centre*

8.1 Upon arrival, a parent or guardian must:

- accompany the child into the Early Learning Centre,
- advise staff that the child has arrived, and
- sign the attendance register.

(b) *Clothing*

8.2 Parents and guardians must ensure that the child has appropriate indoor and outdoor clothing, and a change in clothing.

8.3 Parents and guardians must label all clothing with the child's name.

8.4 Children sometimes need to travel to the Early Learning Centre with an item from home, but such items must remain in the child's cubby while attending the Centre, and the Centre is not responsible for personal items that are lost or damaged.

(c) *Visiting*

8.5 A parent or guardian may visit or call at any time during normal child care hours to discuss or check on his or her child.

(d) *Absences*

8.6 A parent or guardian must notify the Early Learning Centre by 9:00 a.m. (or, in the case of afternoon attendance, by 11:00 a.m.), if the child

- will be absent,
- will be arriving later than scheduled, or
- will need to leave for an appointment.

9. Departure

Preamble:

It is essential to the proper functioning of the program that parents and guardians arrange to have their child collected at the agreed upon time.

Salt Spring Early Learning Centre places considerable importance on maintaining open and continuous communication with staff members, and asks that parents and guardians allow sufficient time for this to occur prior to departure. If departure is scheduled at closing time, arriving an additional few minutes early to retrieve material from cubbies makes for a comfortable departure.

Salt Spring Early Learning Centre has a very strict approach regarding a parent or guardian who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs when collecting a child, and strongly requests that parents or guardians do not place staff in the position of having to deal with this situation.

Policy:

(a) *Advising Staff of Departure*

9.1 A parent or guardian must advise staff before leaving with a child, and must sign the attendance register.

(b) *Alternative Arrangements for Collecting Child*

9.2 In the event of an emergency that prohibits a parent or guardian from collecting a child at the required time, the parent or guardian must make alternative arrangements, and notify the staff as soon as possible that a designated person is authorized to collect the child.

9.3 The designated person must be sixteen years of age or older, and must present picture identification.

9.4 Staff will not allow an unauthorized person to collect a child.

9.5 If an unauthorized person attempts to forcibly collect a child, staff will contact the police immediately.

(c) *Late Collection of Child*

9.6 There is a late charge of \$15.00 per family for the first five minutes, and an additional charge of \$5.00 per family for every five-minute interval thereafter.

(d) *Failure to Collect Child*

9.7 If a parent or guardian fails to collect a child by 5:00 p.m., Salt Spring Early Learning Centre will take the following action:

- (a) staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian(s);
- (b) if unsuccessful, staff will attempt to contact the person(s) on file as alternate care; and
- (c) if unable to contact either parent or alternate, staff will contact the District Supervisor, Ministry of Children and Families, to take custody of the child until the parent can be located.

(e) *Where Person Collecting Child is Intoxicated*

9.8 Early Learning Centre staff will not be asked to assess the sobriety of a person collecting a child, and if a person collecting a child appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the following procedure will be followed:

- (a) Staff will discuss the situation with the person and advise that they should not drive the child home;
- (b) Staff will make every effort to assist in making alternative arrangements;
- (c) Staff will contact the police if the person attempts to drive with or without the child; and
- (d) Staff will contact the Ministry, as obliged by law.

9.9 The board of directors may at any time suspend or terminate care of any child without notice, if it believes that a parent or guardian cannot ensure safe or reliable collection of a child.

10. Custody and Access Issues

Policy:

10.1 Parents and guardians involved in matrimonial proceedings must provide Salt Spring Early Learning Centre with a court-stamped copy of custody orders and court-registered agreements.

10.2 Parents and guardians must provide the Early Learning Centre with updated documents as they become available.

10.3 Early Learning Centre staff will act upon the most recent documents only.

- 10.4 Subject to a court order, Salt Spring Early Learning Centre will be accountable only to the enrolling parent or guardian.
- 10.5 Under no circumstances will Early Learning Centre staff provide letters or other information to a party in a matrimonial dispute relating to a parent or guardian's capacity as a parent or guardian.

11. Security

Policy:

- 11.1 Salt Spring Early Learning Centre shall maintain a secured entrance that restricts people who do not have the security code.
- 11.2 The Centre shall maintain a fire safety plan approved by the fire department.

12. Suspected Child Abuse

Preamble:

The British Columbia *Child, Family and Community Service Act* provides that all children “are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm or threat of harm”, and that “any person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection must promptly report the matter” to the Ministry of Children and Families. Salt Spring Early Learning Centre staff are bound by this legal requirement, and must make a report if they reasonably believe that a child in the Centre needs protection.

Staff are always available to provide information or assistance about parenting or community resources.

Policy:

- 12.1 A staff member who has reason to believe that a child needs protection under section 13 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* must promptly report the matter.

13. Health and Food

Preamble:

Every effort is made to ensure the health and safety of both children and staff members in the Early Learning Centre. We cannot care for a child who is not well enough to participate in all the daily activities, both indoors or outdoors.

Policy:

(a) Health

- 13.1 A parent or guardian must keep the Early Learning Centre up-to-date concerning a child's allergies, food intolerances and other health issues.
- 13.2 A parent or guardian must advise the Early Learning Centre if a child contracts a communicable disease, so that other parents and guardians can be informed.
- 13.3 A child who is ill (eg. fever, infection, diarrhea, communicable disease, or any other type of illness that may be passed on to others, with the exception of the common cold) shall be kept at home to protect the well-being of other children in care.
- 13.4 Children will not be allowed to return to the Early Learning Centre until they have been symptom-free from illness for at least 24 hours, and staff may require a doctor's note.
- 13.5 If a child becomes ill or is injured at the Early Learning Centre, the staff will contact the parent or guardian to take the child home, and if the child is seriously ill or injured and the parent is unavailable, staff will take the child to Lady Minto Hospital.
- 13.6 Early Learning Centre staff will give a child medication prescribed by a medical practitioner or provided by the child's parent or guardian, where the parent or guardian provides written consent and instructions.
- 13.7 Medication must be provided to Early Learning Centre staff and not left in a child's cubby.

(b) Food

- 13.8 The Early Learning Centre provides nutritious morning and afternoon snacks.
- 13.9 Parents or guardians provide lunch. (Please do not send "junk food" or food that is a choking hazard in children under three, such as nuts, popcorn, potato chips, raw whole or sliced carrots, grapes or hot dogs. Also, please make every effort to use reusable containers, and do not send juice boxes or similar containers, as children often do not eat or drink all the contents.)

- 13.10 Parents or guardians must label all lunch bags or boxes, thermoses, containers, juice cups and bottles clearly with the child's name.

14. Behaviour Expectations

Preamble:

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the atmosphere at the Early Learning Centre as a happy, comfortable, and safe place to be.

Staff must be treated on a professional level at all times. Staff are providing quality programming for the child and will not accept treatment that is not respectful. Please deal with concerns in private (away from the children and other adults).

We are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for our children and families. If there is a problem, a meeting can be arranged between parents and staff to define the issues, state points of view and identify solutions when possible. In the case of persistent conflicts, when all reasonable attempts to solve problems have failed, for the sake of the child, family and staff, parents will be asked to make other arrangements. We must at times be able to accept that our Early Learning Centre is not the right fit for some children and families.

The Early Learning Centre is committed to deliver high quality care to children. However, there are times when we are unable to meet the needs of a child. The Early Learning Centre reserves the right to terminate service should the program be unable to meet a child's needs.

Policy:

14.1 Adults and children at all times shall:

- (a) be courteous to other persons, show respect for other persons through behaviour and words, and use acceptable language;
- (b) conduct themselves in a manner which allows each child and staff member to feel safe from verbal and physical abuse;
- (c) resolve conflict in a respectful manner;
- (d) respect the personal property of all persons, and the Early Learning Centre building and equipment;

14.2 Staff will make a confidential written record where they have concerns about a child's behaviour, and will communicate with the child's parent or guardian as appropriate.

- 14.3 The manager may, as appropriate, require a meeting with a child's parents or guardians to identify concerns and the reasons for those concerns, discuss the implications for the child and discuss ways of involving medical or community resources to assist in resolving the concerns.
- 14.4 If, after appropriate efforts, the manager determines that the Early Learning Centre cannot meet the child's needs, the manager may decide to suspend or terminate care of the child.
- 14.5 The board of directors may at any time suspend or terminate care of any child without notice, where the board believes that such action is necessary for the safety and well-being of staff or other children in the Early Learning Centre.

15. Field Trips

Preamble:

The children participate in walkabouts and field trips on a regular basis, and staff will post notices. Parents and guardians are encouraged to share these experiences with their children.

Policy:

- 15.1 A parent or guardian must sign a release form for field trips.
- 15.2 When all staff must participate on field trips to ensure the safety and well being of the children, parents or guardians must make alternative arrangements for care if a child does not participate in a field trip.

16. Image-taking

Preamble:

Occasionally, Early Learning Centre staff take images of the children as they participate in the program. These images are used in the Early Learning Centre for instructional purposes (on posters or charts, in scrapbooks and learning materials, or on cubbies and placemats as identification, for example). Parents and guardians also sometimes take children's images at special events such as birthday parties.

Policy:

- 16.1 Staff may take images of children for use in the Early Learning Centre, but the Centre shall not make use of such images for other purposes without the consent of the child's parent or guardian.
- 16.2 Parents and guardians may take images of children at special events at the Early Learning Centre.

17. Income Tax Receipts

Policy:

- 17.1 The Early Learning Centre will issue tax receipts for monetary donations, and for donations of large pieces of equipment.
- 17.2 The Early Learning Centre will issue child care receipts by February 28, for child care fees paid in the previous year.

18. Employee Wages and Early Learning Centre Fees

Preamble:

The issues of wages and fees involve common objectives, as follows:

- (a) early learning should be accessible to the community, financially and otherwise;
- (b) early learning should be of the very highest quality;
- (c) the employer, and the community, should recognize the importance of the work that ECEs provide, and ECEs should be compensated accordingly; and
- (d) Gulf Islands Early Learning Society should do its utmost to retain highly-qualified and dedicated staff.

Policy:

- 18.1 Before the end of each fiscal year, the board of directors will set employee wages and early learning fees to take effect at the beginning of the following fiscal year.

- 18.2 Wages will be based on the following classifications, with the ECE classification having an appropriate spread to properly recognize skills and performance during the preceding year, based on performance evaluations:
- (a) manager;
 - (b) assistant manager;
 - (c) ECE; and
 - (d) ECE assistant.
- 18.3 The manager and assistant manager may receive bonuses from time to time, in recognition of superior skills and performance, and as financial circumstances permit.
- 18.4 Employees will not receive year-end bonuses.
- 18.5 Early Learning fees should reflect the following considerations:
- (a) fees should be logical as among full-time, part-time and drop-in families;
 - (b) fees should be logical as among 4-hour, 5-hour, 6.5-hour and 9-hour slots;
 - (c) fees should be comparative with other service providers;
 - (d) fees should reflect increased costs since the last fee increase; and
 - (e) fees should reflect the cost of any increase in the level of service provided.
- 18.6
- (a) The annual fee for membership in the Society is \$30.00, and is payable on May 1 of each year, or upon new registration, as the case may be.
 - (b) The annual fee covers one membership in the Society, entitling the person identified as a member to vote at formal meetings.
 - (c) A second parent or guardian may purchase an additional membership from the Society.

19. Reduction in Fees for Staff Members Employed as ECEs

Policy:

- 19.1 A full-time staff member who has one or more children enrolled at SSI Early Learning Center will receive a 35% reduction in fees for one child.

19.2 A staff member waiting for a place for a child enrolled in the SSI Early Learning Centre will be automatically placed at the top of the waiting list.