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Welcome

Merrickville Day Nursery School (MDNS) is a special place that has offered a high-quality childcare program by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of educators since 1987.

The programs that MDNS offers are based on the philosophy that children learn best through play and we strive to support all children's development. We do this by creating environments and program activities that allow for children to take the lead and to feel supported by the staff.

We take pride in providing a safe environment that still allows children to feel free to express their individuality and diversity.

Respect is key in all relationships and we believe this to be very important with our families. We encourage regular communication and connections in person or other means. We use face to face, Lillio App, parent information boards, as well as social media.

Your child's success in our program is our number one goal.

We expect and encourage you to share information with us regarding any concerns, goals, or milestones reached. Learning what your child's strengths, interests and struggles are is key to the success of their time here at MDNS.

We encourage you to ask questions, express concerns and to collaborate with us so we can ensure the best possible experience for your family.

This handbook includes information on various aspects of our program. Please read it over in its entirety.

The term "parent" used through this handbook and any other documents provided by MDNS refers broadly to parents, legal guardians and caregivers.

If you have any questions or want to discuss your child's progress we will be happy to arrange a time to meet. You can always reach out to Erin at 613-269-3707 or email supervisor@mdns.ca.

We look forward to creating a lasting and meaningful relationship with your family.

Program Statement

Merrickville Day Nursery School offers a program that follows “How Does Learning Happen?” pedagogy (HDLH?) and ensure our program aligns with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s policies and curriculum.

High-quality early learning experiences with warm and supportive relationships help children feel happier, less anxious, and more motivated to learn.

The staff at MDNS see all children as competent and capable, complex thinking humans, rich in potential and full of curiosity. Every child should feel like they belong and are a valuable part in their learning environment and they deserve opportunities to succeed.

MDNS believes that the children’s families should also feel like they belong and are equal contributors to their child’s learning and success. We want families to feel engaged in a meaningful way. The educators at MDNS are knowledgeable and caring professionals. They collaborate with each other to create engaging environments and attend professional learning events in order to expand their training and network with professionals from other centers.

What is How Does Learning Happen?

In 2013, the Ontario government released the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework.

Their vision for early years programs:

“Ontario’s children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible, and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.”

The HDLH? Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014) builds on this vision and is a key component. How Does Learning Happen? consists of 4 foundations: belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. These foundations are important to help children grow and flourish.

Belonging: refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual’s experience of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community and the natural world

Well-being: addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as self-care, sense of self and self regulation skills.

Engagement: suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world/environment around them with their inborn natural curiosity they are fully engaged. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem

solving, creative thinking and innovation, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

Expression: or communication (hearing and listening) may take many different forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Exploring materials in their environment supports creativity, problem solving and math. Language rich environments support their ever-growing communication skills, which are fundamental for literacy.

By focusing on the 4 foundations through all aspects of our early learning program, we are ensuring that we are supporting optimal learning and healthy development for all of the children we care for.

The following is a list of goals we strive to achieve each day and how we approach achieving them:

- *Promote health and safety, nutrition and well-being:* The health and safety of the children, staff and volunteers at MDNS is very important to us. All staff are educated on the center's Policies and Procedures and are First Aid and CPR certified. Staff also complete daily checks of: toys, equipment, classrooms, and outdoor play spaces. Monthly fire drills are conducted by the supervisor and all staff, children and parents present at the time are expected to participate. Staff complete visual wellness checks of children upon arrival, as well as familiarize themselves with all medical conditions, allergies, food restrictions, exceptionalities and medication requirements. We ensure our menu follows the Canada Food Guide and our cook is trained and has a Food Handler Certificate. Alternative arrangements are made for children with food allergies and restrictions. Menus can be found on the Lillio app and are posted outside the kitchen. Copies of the menu can be provided upon request. Food from outside the center is strictly prohibited. Exceptions will be made for dietary needs that we are unable to meet. In this case, the food must be store bought, in the original container and clearly labelled with the child's name.
- *Support and promote positive and responsive interactions among children, parents and staff:* MDNS recognizes the importance of working together as a team to ensure high quality care. We communicate with parents face to face, email, phone, social media and through the Lillio app about the children's daily routine: diapering, toilet training, sleeping, meal time, play time, milestones, and any concerns that may arise. Children's artwork is displayed throughout the classrooms and center. Photos are also taken and shared with families in order to allow parents a glimpse into their child's day here at MDNS. We believe in modelling positive behaviour and lead by example. We support and encourage positive and responsive interactions among everyone that is part

of MDNS: children, families, staff. Families may also be directed to resources outside of the center if necessary, such as support services, early years services, speech service, etc.

- *Create a positive and inclusive learning environment and experience for which all children will be supported:* The staff at MDNS believe that each child is unique. We understand that children learn and grow physically, cognitively and socially at their own pace. Staff strive to provide an environment where children are free to learn, explore, try, and develop. Children's communication skills are enhanced each time they socialize with peers, staff, community volunteers and placement students. All Early Childhood Educators are reflective and learn about the children they care for through listening, observation, documentation and discussion with others, in particular the families, in order to completely understand the child as a unique individual. They make observations of the children in their care to learn how children are learning through their experiences in the world around them. MDNS staff will use these observations to foster meaningful interactions and engage the children every day.
- *Promote a balance of indoor and outdoor, creative and imaginary play while incorporating rest/quiet time and taking individual needs of each child into consideration:* The environment plays a big role in how children learn and grow. Through the observations that staff make, they create environments based on their interests. Provocations encourage children to explore and imagine. A variety of age appropriate toys and materials are made available to the children here at MDNS. The space of the classroom includes dramatic play, book area, puzzles and games, sensory, creative, building, and outdoor play. All of these areas help support fine and gross motor as well as literacy, social, numeracy and self regulation. All children who attend the program for 6 hours or more will make use of outdoor space/or community parks every day (weather permitting) for at least 2 hours.
- *Support staff at MDNS with continued professional learning:* We encourage and support our educators to develop and expand their skills and knowledge through professional development opportunities. These can be offered through Lunch and Learn, webinars, and Professional Learning days hosted by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. Staff members are expected to attend monthly staff meetings and to complete at least 10 hours of professional learning a year. The program statement, policies and procedures are reviewed at the start of employment/placement and annually by all staff, volunteers and placement students.

- *Document and review the goals/strategies and make changes if needed:* All staff at MDNS (volunteers and placement students included), are required to read and review our program statement prior to interacting with the children and to review annually and/or anytime the statement is modified or updated. The observations made daily of the children and the daily communication with other staff and families help with daily program planning. Documentation of children's progress and work is a very valuable tool to provide insight into how the children act and think. Observations are made while children are in active play and are made in many forms: photos, notes, documented conversations. Documentations are living documents and can be continually referred to and expanded upon in order to provide the best early learning environment for the children MDNS cares for. The supervisor and staff of MDNS will be involved in continuous conversation with various agencies related to the Early Childhood Education policies and practices.
- *Involve community partners and build on these relationships:* MDNS involves community partners in supporting children, families and staff. We welcome regular visits from the inclusion consultants, program consultants and other staff of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. We happily welcome the local librarian and other community members who have talents and activities to share with our children. MDNS supports volunteers from the community and placement students from high school and college/university. We recognize that hosting placement students and volunteers, supports and helps grow the field of early learning. From time to time we will take walking trips in the community to local businesses. All volunteers and students are required to submit the proper documentation before commencing their placement.
- *Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way, to support their self regulation and to help foster and support the children's exploration, play and inquiry:* **Self regulation is defined as the child's ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions and to maintain focus and attention.** Staff at MDNS will support a child's self regulation by providing experiences, support and encouragement that will help them learn to self regulate. We will provide a learning environment that has a variety of activities and curriculum that encourages choices and it will be supported by attentive and interactive educators. The staff will introduce new ideas, skills and concepts in order to help broaden the child's knowledge and life experiences.

Prohibited Practices

Merrickville Day Nursery School takes the safety of all children very seriously. We want to ensure that all children have a safe and positive experience while here. We recognize that this helps to promote their growth. Harmful disciplinary practices whether emotional or physical are not permitted at MDNS. The following practices are not permitted at Merrickville Day Nursery School:

- The use of corporal punishment
- The physical restraint of a child. This includes: confining a child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in place of proper adult supervision
- Locking the exits of the child care center or room for the purpose of confining a child and/or for the purpose of confining a room in place of proper adult supervision
- The use of harsh or degrading vocabulary, threats, derogatory language that would humiliate, frighten or undermine a child's self respect, dignity and self-worth.
- The deprivation of basic needs. This includes: food, drink, shelter, sleep, the use of a toilet or clothing
- The infliction of bodily harm on children, including making a child eat or drink against their will

In the event that the supervisor observes or is made aware of any practice that is not supported, the supervisor will address the issue with the staff member according to the strategies that are outlined in the Disciplinary Policy that is outlined in the Policies and Procedures and the employee handbook.

All Registered Early Childhood Educators have made a commitment to abide by the standards of their profession as set out in the College of Early Childhood Educators (Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. All ECE's hold themselves accountable and will use the Code of Ethics, the Standards of Practice and the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA) to guide them in their decisions and practice. All staff are held to a high standard of excellence and are informed of and expected to follow MDNS's values, policies and procedures.

General Information

Services Offered

Currently MDNS offers a toddler, preschool and school age program. We do our best to offer hours and days of care that meet the needs of the family's in the community and surrounding areas. We are inclusive and welcome ALL children who may benefit from attending one of our programs. We encourage children to be themselves and to have respect for others.

Some of the activities that occur daily and are geared towards age and development include:

- Small and large group activities
- Art
- Music and movement
- Outdoor play
- Language
- Numeracy
- Self help skills

We accept the following ages in our different programs.

- 18 months - 30 months – Toddler (maximum capacity 15)
- 30 months - 6 years – Preschool (maximum capacity 24)
- 5.6 years – 13 years – School age program (maximum capacity 13)

We also offer a full day program on School Holidays, PD days and through the summer. We will make every effort to provide care on days when the bus is cancelled, however we can not guarantee that we will have staffing.

In the event that buses are cancelled, we will let parents of school age children know by 8:00 am through Lillio if we will be able to offer a full day program that day. In the event that we are unable to offer a full day program and parents choose to use our before and after school service, it is the parents responsibility to transport their child(ren) to and from school.

Hours of Operation

We are open Monday to Friday 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. We are closed for the following Statutory and Civic holidays:

- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Day

- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day

In addition to the statutory closures, MDNS will be closed for the business days between Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Payment is still required for these days as staff will be paid for these days as an incentive for all of their hard work throughout the year.

We will also close twice a year to allow for a deep cleaning and organization of the centre. The dates for these cleanings are the Friday before the Labour Day long weekend and the Friday of March break.

Child Care Rates-

(Base Fees)

Merrickville Day Nursery School is enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare System (CWELCC), therefore the current rates for children under 6 are as follows:

Toddler.....	\$23.91
Preschool.....	\$23.04
Before School.....	\$11.69
After School.....	\$12.00
Before and After...	\$12.00
Full Day.....	\$20.53

All rates are per day and payments are made on a monthly basis.

Funding under the CWELCC system is intended to support eligible children in Leeds and Grenville. An eligible child is:

- Any child under 6 years old; and
- Up until June 30 in a calendar year, any child who: turns 6 years old between January 1 and June 30 in that calendar year
- Is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool, kindergarten or family age group, or licensed home child care

Children over 6 years of age.

Before School.....	\$11.69
After School.....	\$12.00

Before and After...\$23.49

Full Day.....\$43.44

All rates are per day and payments are made on a monthly basis.

Please note we do not offer half day services. Prices are also subject to increase with 60 days notice for children not eligible for CWELCC.

(Non-Base Fees)

Over time Fees

An additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will be applied to families who drop children off before 7:00am and/or pick up after 5:30. (Late pick up policy on page 17)

Late Payment Fees

Childcare fees are due by the 1st (first) of each month. If payment is not received by the 1st, parents will receive a warning letter that if payment is not received by the 15th, care will be terminated. Payment arrangements will be made at the supervisor's discretion if requested in writing in advance of the 1st.

Merrickville Day Nursery School's fees are approved by the Board of Directors and by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville annually. The parent fees help to cover the expenses of the children including snacks and meals, utilities, salaries, etc.

Parent fees are collected in advance of care and are based on the schedule you submit. Parents will receive invoices through the Lillio App at least 2 weeks before they are due. Payments can be made by e-transfer to supervisor@mdns.ca.

Receipts

Receipts for payments made for childcare fees made for the year will be issued on or before February 28th. Income tax receipts will be emailed to families. Where emailing receipts is not an option, they will be available for pick up at the office of MDNS.

Fee Subsidies

Fee subsidies are available through the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. Eligibility for these subsidies is determined by the United Counties and is based on a financial needs assessment.

If you would like more information about eligibility requirements, please contact:

Community and Social Services Division

25 Central Avenue West

Brockville, Ontario

K6V 4N6

613-342-3840

1-800-770-2170

Families that receive fee subsidy are responsible for paying their contribution directly to Merrickville Day Nursery School and for fulfilling the requirements of their Fee Subsidy Agreement in order to maintain their subsidy. Childcare fees are the responsibility of the parents until subsidy has been approved.

If for some reason a family is no longer eligible for fee subsidy, they are responsible for paying the full monthly fee or withdrawing their child(ren).

If fee subsidy changes the approved days of care it is the responsibility of the family to inform MDNS.

Adjustments

If adjustments need to be made due to adding extra days to schedules (when/if there is room) they will be added immediately and due upon receipt of updated invoice. It is your responsibility to make certain we are aware of any care needs you have in order for us to make our calculations as accurately as possible.

Refunds

There will be no refunds or exceptions made to invoices for absences due to illness, vacation, appointments or for any other reason.

No refunds will be issued when the daycare must temporarily close due to emergency situations/conditions (snowstorms/extreme weather events, lack of heat, loss of power, etc.).

Annual Survey

Because MDNS values the opinions of the families we serve, we will conduct a parent feedback survey every spring. This is your opportunity to voice your opinions and to let us know what you think we are doing great and what you think we could improve on. We also welcome your feedback year round in writing to: supervisor@gmail.com or in person.

Licensing

Merrickville Day Nursery School is licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) and is inspected annually to ensure compliance with the Ontario Ministry of Education's legislation. This legislation includes oversight of equipment, furnishings, program planning, staff training, fire safety and emergency information, insurance,

building and accommodation, health and medical supervision, nutrition and behaviour management.

Enrollment

The Center's Role

During the enrollment process, MDNS will provide you with a copy of the Parent Handbook and a series of forms that are required to be completed and returned prior to your child's first day. The supervisor will set up a date and time that is convenient for your family to come and tour the center and will answer any questions you may have. We will also ask questions to help us get to know you better. We will also introduce you to program staff. After we have received your completed registration paperwork, we will schedule integration visits. These steps are very important to complete in order to help make your child feel as comfortable and welcome as possible at MDNS and for you to be well-informed of the center's practices and policies prior to the start of care.

The forms that are required to be completed and returned prior to care beginning are:

1. Childcare application
2. Any medical forms (special needs, allergies, medical needs)
3. Immunization records
4. Medication authorization form (if applicable)

Emergency Contact Information

It is extremely important to ensure that your child's emergency contact information is kept up to date here at the center. Please provide all of your contact information in complete form: telephone number for work, mobile phone number, and home phone number as well as for the individuals you have designated as an emergency contact in the event we are not able to contact you in an emergency situation. Advise us immediately if these numbers change.

Wait List Policy

When our programs are at capacity, families who request will be placed on our waiting list. MDNS offers space to families based on the date the waitlist application was received.

Merrickville Day Nursery School will make every effort to accommodate all requests for the registration of children into our program. The supervisor will manage the waitlist.

MDNS will follow the following procedures for the waitlist:

Receive a request to place a child on the waiting list

1. The supervisor will receive a request to place child(ren) on the waitlist via phone, email or in person
2. No fee will be charged to be placed on the waitlist

Placing a child on the waiting list

1. The supervisor will place a child on the waiting list in chronological order, based on date and time the request was received

Determining placement priority when space becomes available

1. Children of current employees of MDNS. Employees must complete and provide a waitlist request
2. Siblings of children currently enrolled. To be considered, they must be included on the waitlist

Priority is given to current employees, and siblings of currently enrolled children if they are registered on the waitlist.

Offering an available space

1. Parents of children on the waiting list will be notified via telephone or email that a space has become available. Notes will be kept on the form of date and time of contact and if a message was left.
2. Parents are provided with 2 business days to respond before the space is offered to the next family on the waitlist.
3. Where a parent has not responded within the 2 business days, the supervisor or designate will contact the next family to offer them the space.
4. If a parent responds after the 2 business days and the space has been offered, the first family will be placed at the top of the waiting list.
5. A child may be removed from the waiting list at the supervisor's discretion due to an inability to contact parents after multiple attempts.

Responding to parents who inquire about their child's placement on the waiting list

1. The supervisor will be the contact person for parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's place on the waiting list.
2. The supervisor will do their best to give an accurate estimate for length of wait on the waitlist.

Maintaining privacy and confidentiality

1. The waitlist will be maintained in a way that the privacy and confidentiality of the families on the waitlist is protected. Only the approximate place on the list will be provided.

2. The names of other children and their families or their place on the list will not be shared with any individual other than staff members.

Program/Room Transfers

Space is not guaranteed in any program/room. Children will be transferred to the next program/room based upon age and available space. Staff will also take into consideration the readiness of a child when considering moving a child (if space is available). The supervisor will always do their best to ensure there is room for your child to move to the program/room for their age group.

Withdrawal

Parents are required to submit in writing their desire to withdraw from MDNS. This request must be submitted to the supervisor 1 month prior to the date of withdrawal. There will be no credit for partial month care.

Discharge

MDNS recognizes that we may not meet the needs of all children. MDNS reserves the right to discharge a child, if in the opinion of Merrickville Day Nursery School it is not in the best interest of the child or the daycare the child remains in care. For example:

- A child's needs are not being met in the childcare setting despite having exhausted all available resources and there is not feasible method of accommodation
- A child's behaviour is detrimental to his/her childcare experience
- A child's behaviour is detrimental to the experience of other children in care
- A child's behaviour is endangering the health, safety and security of other children and/or staff
- A parent/guardian/caregiver violates the policies of MDNS

In these situations, childcare staff will discuss the situation with the parents to find possible solutions. When there is no reasonable solution, parents will be provided with 2 weeks notice.

Please note that in extreme and exceptional cases MDNS waives the right to give 2 weeks notice and the discharge will take effect immediately. These would be cases where there is a safety risk to themselves, other children and/or staff.

Arrival and Departure Routines

It is the parent's responsibility to dress and undress their child upon arrival and departure. It is important for the safety of the children that they remain in the building until their parents are ready to leave. Once a child is picked up they become the responsibility of the parent. Please respect the policies of the center while in the

building or participating in activities outside of the center. Children should not be left unsupervised in the center, atrium or empty rooms at any time.

When dropping off/picking up, please make your presence aware to the staff. Children will only be released to the person's identified on the children's information package.

Parents are asked to not enter the classrooms at drop off or pick up. This helps keep the routine running smoothly and makes the transition easier by preventing high emotions that may upset other children in the program.

Our center values your child's safety, so we will not release or accept drop off or pick up of children to/from older siblings who are under the age of 16. If you would like to have an older sibling drop off or pick up please ensure that they are aware of the policy and please complete the authorization form.

In keeping with the Ministry of Education's Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures, we have implemented the following process:

Accepting a child into care

- When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off program staff in the room must:
 - Greet the parent/guardian and child
 - Ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been.
 - Where a parent has indicated someone other than parents will be picking up, staff will confirm they are on the Lillio app and listed on the child's emergency contact information form. Where the individual is not listed, staff will ask parents for authorization in writing.
 - Document the change in the pick up with the supervisor and on the white board in the class
 - Sign the child in on the classroom paper attendance

Where a child has not arrived to care as expected

1. Where a child does not arrive at MDNS as expected and the parent has not communicated a change in the drop off routine, the staff in the classroom must:
 - Inform the Supervisor and they will commence contacting the child's family no later than 9:30 am. (In the event the supervisor is not on site, the designate will start the process.) The supervisor will send a message to the family through Lillio. If there is no response then the supervisor will begin calling the numbers listed in the child's file.
 - If unable to reach either parent or guardian then the emergency contacts will be called. If unable to reach the emergency contacts and to verify the safety of the child then the supervisor will make a call to the OPP.

- Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record. The supervisor will note any additional information in the daily log.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for. Where staff do not know the individual who is picking up, staff shall:
 - Confirm with another staff that the individual picking the child is authorized in writing to do so, by the child's parent/guardian
 - Where the above is not possible, ask the individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information with the information on the child's file or written authorization.
 - Please notify the center in writing if someone other than those listed will be picking up or dropping off. All new pick up persons will be asked to show identification. **We will not release your child to anyone without your prior written consent.**

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before the center closes)

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated (this could also be assumed from the regular routine) with staff a specific time or time frame that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up by 5:30, the supervisor will be made aware and attempt to make contact with the parent/guardian by phone. A message will also be sent through Lillio.
 - Where the supervisor is unable to make contact with the parent/guardian, the supervisor will send another message through Lillio and by leaving a voicemail letting the parent/guardian know that they will be contacting the emergency contacts to pick up the child.
 - In the situation that the individual that was to pick up is an authorized individual, the supervisor will make an attempt to reach them by phone and/or email if provided. The supervisor will then attempt to reach the parents and let them know that their child was not picked up as planned.
 - Where the supervisor has not heard back from the parent/guardian/authorized individual, staff will contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's file

Where a child has not been picked up and the center is closing

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child has not arrived by 5:30 staff shall ensure the child is given a snack and activity, while they wait to be picked up
2. One staff shall stay with the child and the second staff will contact the supervisor and inform them of the situation. The supervisor will proceed with calling the parent/guardian to advise the child is still in care and inquire about their pick up time. In the case where the person picking the child up is an authorized individual, the supervisor shall contact the parent/guardian to confirm the authorized individual and let the parent know that the child has not been picked up.
3. If the supervisor is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the supervisor shall contact the emergency contacts and/or other authorized individuals on the child's file.
4. Where the supervisor is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file by 6:30, the supervisor will proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS): 613-498-2100. The supervisor and staff will follow the CAS's directions with respect to next steps.

Under absolutely no circumstance will MDNS staff or the supervisor release a child from care to walk home unattended.

All individuals picking up and dropping off children must be at least 16 years of age and with written authorization.

Families are required to notify MDNS by email or through the app if a child will be absent and to give a reason for the absence. This also applies to children who will not be attending the after-school program.

Children are to be dropped off before 9:30am. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the supervisor if the request has been made in writing at least 24 hours in advance. Exceptions will only be made when the supervisor deems that the late drop off will not affect the program routine.

We ask that parents refrain from picking up before 2:00 pm as this can interfere with the nap time of all children at the center. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the supervisor if the request has been made in writing at least 24 hours in advance.

Court Orders

MDNS and its staff are unable to prevent parents from picking up their children if they are listed on the child's registration paperwork, unless there are specific court orders. In

this event, a copy of the court order must be provided to MDNS and placed in the child's file. Clear written instructions regarding custody/access as related to pick up/drop off must be provided.

In the event a non-custodial parent attempts to pick up a child, we will contact the custodial parent and uphold the court order, unless other instructions are provided by the custodial parent.

In the situations of custody, separation/divorce or parental disputes, keep in mind that Merrickville Day Nursery is a neutral and safe place for your child. If it is deemed that staff are being placed in uncomfortable, stressful or dangerous situations by parents in conflict, MDNS reserves the right to discharge your family from care.

Impairment

The safety of all the children at MDNS is very important to us. Should a parent or designate arrive to pick up a child with the intent to drive home and staff suspect they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will respectfully request the parent or designate choose an alternate method of transportation. Staff will offer to call a taxi, a family member or a friend to pick up the adult and child. In the event the parent insists on driving home, the educators will contact the police.

Emergency and Unforeseen Closure

Our programs could close at the last minute for any of the following reasons:

- No power
- No heat
- No water
- Serious occurrences: flood, fire, vandalism or when the school is deemed unsafe for use
- Severe weather events
- If the local school board (Upper Canada District School Board and/or Eastern Ontario Catholic School Board) closes schools
- If mandated by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education or the Ontario Government
- Pandemic

In the event of inclement weather, the center may close early. This will be at the supervisor's discretion and parent's will be notified by 8:00am if the center will be closing early in order to allow parents sufficient time to plan pick up.

Parents will be contacted and asked to pick their child(ren) up ASAP if the program/center closes.

If a decision is made to close the center, every effort will be made to do it in a timely manner to allow families to make alternate arrangements. Parents will be notified through email and/or the Lillio app.

Evacuation and Emergency Shelter

In the event that we must evacuate the center:

- Staff and children will exit the building and meet in the parking lot
- Staff will take role call to ensure all children have been safely evacuated
- The supervisor or designate will double check that all staff and children have been evacuated
- Staff and children will walk to the emergency shelter
**Merrickville Community Center
106 Read Street
Merrickville, Ontario**
- Once everyone has arrived safely to the shelter, the supervisor will begin calling the emergency contacts to come pick up the children

In the event that MDNS is closed for any of the above events/situations fees will not be reimbursed. Should the closure last an extended period of time the Board of Directors will make the decision about reimbursement of fees. These circumstances would be very rare.

MDNS has an agreement with Healey Bus Lines, that in the situation of inclement weather, we will contact the emergency number for Healey's and children will be bused to the emergency shelter.

Off Site Activities

Excursions are an exciting and fun time for children and it allows for many opportunities of growth in their development. Children will never be taken off the premises without written consent from the parent/guardian.

Merrickville is a village rich in history and beauty and provides the perfect backdrop for early learning by walking the streets or visiting a local park. Your registration package will include consent for the staff at MDNS to take your child(ren) on walks in the community or to the local park. From time to time, we may make a special visit to some of the local businesses. These trips will require parental consent.

More elaborate field trips may be planned if parents are interested and able to participate in these outings. Field trips require that every child is accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Health, Wellness and Safety

Illness Policy

The staff at MDNS help to reduce the spread of illnesses and infectious diseases and work diligently to prevent outbreaks by following hygiene, sanitation and infection control practices. This includes: disinfection of toys on a daily basis, proper hand washing of themselves and children, the use of PPE to prevent contact with bodily fluids, etc. We ask parents to help support us in this role by keeping children who are experiencing symptoms of ill health at home until the signs are no longer present. Symptoms include:

- Fever (38.3 C or greater)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharge from the eyes
- Skin rashes
- Severe and/or croupy coughs

Health checks are completed at the arrival of each child and children are observed throughout the day by MDNS staff in order to help minimize the spread of the illness in the center. When staff observe symptoms of ill-health, the child may not attend for the day or the parents will be notified and asked to pick up the child in a timely manner.

When a child is sent home due to gastro type symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea), they must remain away from care for 48 hours, not including the day they were sent home.

When a child is sent home for any other ill symptom (fever, cough, rash, etc) they must remain away from care for 24 hours, not including the day they were sent home. If they were experiencing a fever, it is important to note that it is 24 hours without fever reducing medication.

Records of the symptoms of ill health are recorded and maintained in the children's file and kept on site. This helps the center track any potential outbreak.

When a child becomes ill at the center, they may be removed from the program and placed in a separate area if staffing allows.

If a child has been prescribed antibiotics, they may return to care after being on medication for 24 hours.

If a child has been diagnosed with whooping cough, they can not return to care for 2 weeks.

Also, please note, that although a child may return to care based on the above information, if you feel that your child will not be able to participate fully in the program, then they should be kept home to rest.

In some cases, a medical note may be required for readmittance (example: that a rash is not a risk to others).

Immunization

The health, safety and well-being of all children at MDNS is extremely important to all of us. Part of the registration process includes providing us with a record of your child's immunization. We will make a copy of it and include it in your child's file.

If you are unable to provide proof of immunization or an affidavit excluding your child from being immunized, your child will not be permitted to start care at Merrickville Day Nursery School. You can ask for a copy of the Ministry form for exclusion from this policy from the supervisor.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide MDNS with any updated immunizations.

Appropriate Clothing

Every day that a child arrives to care here at MDNS, he/she must be ready to participate in the daily activities without fear of getting dirty. Parents should dress their child(ren) in simple play clothing that is free of complicated fasteners and is easy to wash. Please do not request or expect the educators to change a child from pajamas into daytime clothing.

Please provide at least one full extra set of clothing for ALL seasons. Toileting mishaps can happen at any age and all children participate in a variety of activities that can become quite messy. Don't forget to change the size of clothing and footwear as your child grows.

Clothing both indoor and outerwear should be such that it is easy for a child to dress themselves or with minimal help. This is a great self help skill that promotes self esteem, independence and perseverance.

Your child's teachers may also provide a list of items to bring in order to ensure comfort and success in the classroom.

Make sure everything is labelled!

Safe Footwear

Comfortable indoor shoes are required while attending any program at MDNS for many reasons:

- Prevent stepped on toes
- Prevents slips or falls
- Fire drills

If children are wearing shoes that do not have heel straps then they will not be permitted to use the play structure. Outdoor footwear must remain securely on the child's feet for all play structure activities. For this reason, we strongly suggest avoiding flip flops for fancy sandals.

Extra Clothing

From time to time, your child may have to borrow clothing from our daycare supply because their extra supply was already used. Please launder and return immediately.

Children must have appropriate outdoor wear for all weather conditions. Provide sweaters, jackets, splash pants/muddy buddies, boots, snow pants, mittens, caps/hats, etc. (extra sets of mittens and socks are always a good idea). We enjoy at least 2 hours of outdoor play a day as per ministry regulations. We do not keep children indoors unless there is an extreme weather event or the local health unit has posted an advisory.

Diapering

For children not yet toilet trained, parents are required to supply diapers, wipes and any creams that are to be applied. Staff will send reminders through Lillio in advance of running out, requesting more supplies.

If parents choose to use cloth diapers, we will support this decision. Our policy outlines the regulations we must follow in order to ensure we decrease the risk of communicable diseases.

Toileting

The toileting routine is part of the daily schedule at MDNS. A diapering log is kept on paper and through the Lillio app.

We use a positive approach to potty learning with the support of parents by encouraging and celebrating. The educators recognize that children grow and develop at their own pace and different environments may influence their progress. We ask parents to be patient in the toilet learning process and work together with the staff at MDNS. Staff appreciate that parents may have some useful tips on what works for them at home and welcome this information in order to help your child succeed, consistency is key.

Please make sure you dress your children in clothing that is easy for them to take off and put on during this learning stage.

Sunscreen and Sun Safety

Parents are required to provide sunscreen for their children. The authorization for the application of this is included in the registration paperwork. Sunscreen is applied to children when the UV is 2 or higher. Sunscreen must be labelled with the child's name

and not expired. Staff will notify parents when sunscreen has expired or when requesting more supply.

MDNS spends a great deal of time outdoors as the Ministry of Education states that children who are in care for 6 hours or more a day, must spend at least 2 hours outside each day. Please ensure that you provide a sun hat and/or sunglasses. Sunscreen will always be applied prior to going outdoors and will be reapplied every hour.

Ticks

Ticks are becoming more and more common in our area and we must be diligent about spotting ticks in order to prevent the spread of the diseases they transmit, most commonly Lyme disease.

If a tick is found attached to a child, MDNS will contact the parents immediately to allow them to come and remove it. MDNS has tick removal keys here for parents that may need to remove a tick and not have a removal tool.

Due to the importance of ensuring a tick is removed properly, under no circumstance will MDNS staff attempt to remove an attached tick.

Nutrition

Merrickville Day Nursery School is a nut free facility. We encourage you to refrain from feeding any nut product to your child(ren) prior to arriving at the center.

MDNS provides two snacks and a lunch to children who attend a full day program. Children in the before and after school program will be provided with a morning snack and after school snack. If we notice children showing signs of being hungry towards the end of the day, a small snack will be provided. Menus are posted in the center and available on the Lillio app and follow a 4 week rotation. If parents would like a copy, MDNS is happy to provide one for them. Our cook is trained with a Food Handler Certificate and is able to accommodate many dietary needs. **Certain food allergies/sensitivities may require MDNS to ask parents to provide some food items. Example: Celiac disease. If you are requested to bring in food to meet your child's dietary needs it must be in the original container, clearly labelled with the child's name and adhere to the nut free policy we have here.**

Our meals are prepared to follow the Canada Food Guide and prepared and presented in a way that encourages children to feed themselves and to try new foods.

The staff at MDNS model healthy eating and positive table habits, by sitting at the table with the children and eating the same meal the children are served. Staff encourage the use of manners and older children are encouraged to help clear their dishes.

Children are encouraged to try all the foods that are offered, but never forced to eat or drink.

Anaphylactic Policy

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that results in circulatory collapse or shock and can be fatal. It occurs in response to an allergen such as nuts, latex, rubber, medication, insect stings, etc. Parents are responsible for advising Merrickville Day Nursery School of any medical condition their child may have including: allergies, asthma and any other life-threatening condition.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide MDNS with the following:

- List of foods, ingredients, and/or items that cause allergic or anaphylactic reaction
- List of symptoms to look for that may be unique/specific to the child if they are having a reaction
- A completed Anaphylaxis Emergency plan: signed by parent and doctor
- At least 2 epinephrine auto-injectors (Epi-Pen)
- Any and all additional information regarding the life threatening condition
- Update the information at least annually and/or any time there is a change to the medical condition

We encourage parents to have their child(ren) wear a medical identification bracelet while in care.

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risk of an exposure to any anaphylaxis causing agents. MDNS will make every attempt to reduce the risk of exposure by:

- Ensuring our programs are nut free. No food is to be brought into the center unless it has been approved by the supervisor for dietary needs. **This includes birthday cakes and cupcakes.**
- MDNS will provide alternatives for all allergies when we can. If we are unable to provide an alternative, the family will be permitted to provide food following our nutrition policy (please see Nutrition).
- If a child is known to have an allergy to chemicals or other agents, we will ensure we are using a safe brand of chemical/agent for the child. If needed the use of certain products or brands will be eliminated.
- If a child suffers from an anaphylactic reaction and/or the Epi-Pen is administered, 911 will be called. When the child is transported to the hospital, they will be accompanied by the supervisor and the parents will be contacted. Upon registration parents are required to complete an Emergency form and a medical form that informs us of any allergies or health issues. An Individual Plan will also be completed that provides consent for the administration of the Epi-Pen, parent contact info. The Epi-Pen will be placed in a clearly marked, easily accessible place in the classroom. The Epi-Pen is to remain with the child and teachers at all times (playground, trips, walks, etc.)

MDNS keeps an updated list of all allergies in each room and in the kitchen. All staff are informed of the child's enrollment. Staff sign off annually and upon being hired acknowledging that they have familiarized themselves with the Individualized Plan.

All staff must be trained in First Aid and CPR.

Medication Authorization

MDNS will follow specific guidelines to ensure the safe and accurate dosage of medication is given. The following procedure will help avoid potential problems.

- Staff will ensure parents have filled out the appropriate forms stating the child's name, name of medication, time of administration, and storage instructions. A form should be filled out for each medication.
- Staff will ensure medication is in the original container, labeled with the child's name, date medication was dispensed (if applicable) and that there are storage instructions. MDNS will not accept old medications or medications dispensed for other children.
- Staff will ensure the parent has signed the medication authorization form giving permission for the supervisor or the designate to administer. In the case of Epi-Pens or asthma inhalers, the staff providing care will administer as these are time sensitive medications.
- Volunteers and students are not permitted to administer medication
- Children will be moved to the kitchen to administer the medication. The supervisor will read the container to ensure the proper name, dosage and medication. If there is any conflict with the permission form, parents will be contacted prior to administering.
- Staff will document the dose, time and their signature after administering the medication. If a dose is missed, the reason needs to be documented and parents notified.
- Leftover medication will be returned to its locked container for parent to pick up or discarded with parental permission
- Any accidental administration of medication (example, dose error, wrong child given medication) will be documented in the daily log and reported to the parents immediately.

Please ensure that any medication that has been stored in diaper bags or overnight bags used outside of the center has been removed.

Communicable Diseases

Children diagnosed with a communicable disease may not attend the center until the recommended time of isolation has passed. Individual circumstances vary and fact sheets are available from the daycare as well as online from the local health unit. When the center has a confirmed case, a notice will be provided to parents to inform you of signs and symptoms to look for.

The following is a list of communicable diseases that may occur in a childcare setting:

- **Chickenpox**
- **Diarrhea and Vomiting**
- **Ear Infection**
- **Fifth Disease**
- **Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease**
- **Impetigo**
- **Influenza**
- **Measles**
- **Meningitis**
- **Mononucleosis**
- **Mumps**
- **Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)**
- **Rubella**
- **Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever**
- **Whooping Cough**

First Aid and Emergency Response

Minor accidents and illnesses are common occurrences with children. All staff working directly with the children at MDNS are trained in First Aid and CPR. Their certification is monitored and they are required to update it prior to expiry. When a minor cut or scrape occurs, parents are notified (usually at pick up) and asked to sign an incident report. The parent is provided a copy of the report and a copy is put in the child's file and documented in the daily log.

Serious injuries and illnesses are reported to parents immediately. Parents will be requested to pick their child up at the earliest convenience and seek medical attention if needed. If during care, there is an emergency requiring immediate attention, MDNS staff will call 911 and accompany the child to the hospital. Parents will be notified to meet the child and staff at the hospital.

Serious Occurrences

MDNS takes the safety of all the children and educators seriously. In the event of a serious occurrence, during our operating hours, the appropriate Ministry directed reporting and public notice procedure will be followed.

The definition of a serious occurrence is:

- Death of a child
- Allegation of abuse and/or neglect
- Life-threatening injury or illness
- Missing or Unsupervised child(ren)
- Unplanned disruption of service
 - Fire

- Flood
- Gas leak
- Detection of Carbon Monoxide
- Outbreak
- Lockdown (outside threat in community)
- Other (emergency relocation or temporary closure)

Reporting and Posting of a Serious Occurrence

A verified serious occurrence is reported immediately to the parents/guardians, the organization's Administration and Board of Directors and relevant others (fire, police, children's aid). A report is filed with the Ministry of Education within 24 hours of the occurrence and the Counties are also notified within 24 hours of the occurrence.

The serious occurrence notification form that was completed on the Ministry site is posted for a minimum of 10 business days in a conspicuous place (near the centre's license) in order to communicate information to the parents about the event. Personal and private information is protected when the form is completed.

Nap and Rest Time

In accordance with CCEYA requirements all of the children are permitted to sleep, rest or engage in quiet activities following lunch. School age children are not permitted to sleep.

A daily rest time is provided for all children in our preschool and younger programs. Parents are encouraged to bring a soft toy and blanket to help make this time more comfortable for the children.

We recognize the sleep needs of individual children differ and we offer quiet activities to those who are unable to sleep, will not nap or per parent request do not nap.

Outdoor Play

In keeping with the Ministry of Education's regulation on outdoor play, all children who attend MDNS for 6 hours or more will spend at least 2 hours outside each day, weather permitting. To clarify, the Ministry of Education defines weather permitting as:

- Extreme heat/humidity alert
- Extreme cold (-15 C or colder or a windchill of -20 C or colder)
- Poor air quality (an advisory has been issued)
- Thunderstorm warning
- Tornado warning
- Winter and Ice storms (heavy snowfall, hail, ice pellets, etc.)

For the purpose of consistency between MDNS and parents, we will use the The Weather Network app and guidance from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit for decision making on staying indoors.

Inclement or Extreme Weather

MDNS will make every attempt to open on days that there is inclement or extreme weather (heavy snowfall, freezing rain or other extreme weather events).

When buses are cancelled, we do not walk children to the schools that we serve.

We will make every attempt to operate a full day program, however sometimes that is not possible due to staffing. In this case, we are more than happy to provide before and after school care, but it is the responsibility of the parents to get their child(ren) to and from school.

On days when buses are cancelled, we will not open our center until 8:00 am and the supervisor may make the decision to close early. This will be done at the supervisor's discretion when the safety of the staff could be at risk by remaining open until 5:30 pm. In the situation that the supervisor decides to close early, the decision will be made by 8:00am in order to allow parents time to arrange pick up. Parents will be notified through the Lillio app.

It is the parents responsibility to check the STEO website to stay informed of cancellations.

On the rare occasion that the local school boards decide to close the schools, Merrickville Day Nursery School will also be closed.

Smoking and Vaping

Our childcare facility is a SMOKE FREE setting. By order of the local Medical Officer of Health you must extinguish all cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc. before entering our premises. This policy assists with ensuring the health and safety of those persons (children and adults) who suffer from smoke related allergies, asthma, etc. Educators and volunteers of this organization are not permitted to smoke and/ or vape while on the premises. This includes in their vehicle on their break.

Volunteers and Student Policy

It is the policy of MDNS to never leave a volunteer or student unsupervised. Direct unsupervised access is not permitted for people who are not employees of Merrickville Day Nursery School. Students and Volunteers are never counted in ratios. All students and volunteers will be expected to review policies and procedures of the center prior to being placed in a room.

Bullying, Harassment and Violence

MDNS is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Bullying, harassment and violence will not be tolerated from any person. Merrickville Day Nursery will take all reasonable measures to prevent incidents and to protect our staff.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Parents, clients and members of the public are not governed by this policy, MDNS will not tolerate any behaviour constituting bullying, harassment or violence to be directed towards our staff.

Verbal or physical aggression directed by a parent, guardian or other adult toward a staff member will result in this person being asked to leave the premises of MDNS immediately. If they do not follow this request, the local authorities will be contacted to intervene.

Future admittance to MDNS may be refused.

Child and Family Services Act & Duty to Report

The Child and Family Services Act states that every person who has a reason to believe that a child is at risk has a legal obligation to report his or her suspicions immediately to the Children's Aid Society. MDNS is committed to meeting the legal requirements of this act and to ensuring the safety and protection of all the children enrolled here.

Educators have a duty to report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse or neglect. It is the responsibility of the Children's Aid Society to investigate the report.

Educators can be fine \$1000.00 for failing to report a situation.

Fire Safety

Fire drills are conducted monthly in order to practice our emergency evacuation techniques. The local fire authority as well as our alarm monitoring service conduct annual inspections.

MDNS will follow the evacuation and emergency shelter procedure in the event of a real fire.

Criminal Reference Check(CRC)/Vulnerable Sector Screening(VCS)

The CCEYA, 2014 states that all staff and volunteers who are involved with the children must provide a criminal reference check/vulnerable sector screening to ensure they are suitable for working with children. The information obtained in these checks is strictly confidential.

A CRC/VCS is required for the following positions; teachers, volunteers, support staff and anyone who has direct contact with children.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in our childcare center and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among children,

parents/guardians, childcare staff and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are knowledgeable and are available to support parent conversations in a positive way.

All issues or concerns raised by parents will be taken seriously by the Board of Directors and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties 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 parent will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue/concern will be provided to the parents within 7 business days. The person who raised the issue will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

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

Confidentiality

Every issue will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the parents, children, staff, students or volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (Ministry of Education, College of ECE, law enforcement or Children's Aid).

Conduct

MDNS maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role modeling for the children in our care. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated from any person.

If at any point a parent/guardian, staff, feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may end the conversation immediately and report the situation to the supervisor.

Concerns About the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

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

If a parent expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society directly.

Anyone who becomes aware of such concerns is responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement.

Procedure for Reporting:

Program related concerns

1. Raise the issue/concern to classroom staff

General, Center or Operation related concerns

1. Raise the issue/concern to
 - Supervisor
 - Board of Directors

Staff, Duty to Parent, Supervisor or License related concerns

1. Raise the issue/concern to
 - Classroom staff
 - Supervisor

Student/Volunteer Related concerns

1. Raise the issue to
 - Classroom staff
 - Supervisor
 - Board of Directors

Steps for responding to concern

1. Address the issue with a teacher, or
2. Arrange a meeting with the parent within 2 business days
3. Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person notified is unable to address the matter
4. Ensure the investigation of the issue is initiated by the appropriate party within 2 business days or as soon as reasonably possible
5. Provide a resolution(s) or outcome to the parent who raised the concern

Escalation of Issues/Concerns

Where a parent is not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue verbally or in writing to the supervisor.

Issues or concerns related to compliance with the requirements set out in the CCEYA, 2014 and Ontario Reg.137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues can also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies where appropriate.

