

Welcome to East Toronto Village Children's Centre

Family Policy and Procedure Handbook

Introduction

East Toronto Village Children's Centre was incorporated in 1985 as a non-profit day care centre. This was in response to the area's need for additional quality day care for preschool and school-age children.

Our program is managed by Early Childhood Educators and administered by a voluntary Board of Directors. ETVCC is inspected and licensed yearly by the Province of Ontario under the requirements of the *Day Nurseries Act*. We are also inspected annually by Toronto Children's Services as we have a Purchase of Service Agreement with the City which provides fee subsidies to families who qualify.

A Board of Directors is elected annually at a General Meeting. The Board is responsible for the major financial concerns and the policy direction of the Centre, and consists of parents of children in care, church members and interested members of the community. All parents of children enrolled at ETVCC are members of the Corporation and are eligible to sit on the Board of Directors. Parents are encouraged to bring their concerns and comments to the attention of the Board of Directors. This should be done through either the Centre's Supervisor or a Board member.

Upon admission into ETVCC, families are in good standing. However, breaching any of the policies outlined in the handbook places the family at risk of being found not in good standing with ETVCC. A parent who is not in good standing is ineligible to be on the Board of Directors.

It should be noted that discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, colour, national origin, political or religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family relationships or disability is prohibited by or within East Toronto Village Children's Centre.

Mission Statement

To provide superior childcare where a child is encouraged to thrive to his or her full potential in an environment that is stimulating, fun, safe and secure, and is financially accessible to the community.

Program Philosophy

The program at East Toronto Village Children's Centre is based on identifying and meeting the child's mental and physical needs to encourage optimal individual development.

ETVCC believes that an ideal child care setting

- respects and values individual differences of children, parents and staff
- promotes learning through play
- encourages children to explore and learn within a flexible framework
- promotes social interaction in a warm, loving, trusting environment
- provides appropriate games, toys and equipment to promote learning
- promotes active participation of parents and staff in the operation of the day care
- invites frequent communication between staff and parents about the child's progress
- encourages and supports staff in self-directed continuing education and learning

Statement of Inclusion

ETVCC is committed to promoting developmental care and education for each child in collaborative relationships with the family and community. We believe an inclusive approach encourages tolerance, understanding and cooperation in all children.

Through our program we strive to provide the experiences each child needs to grow to his or her fullest potential and recognize success comes differently to children at different developmental levels. We place an emphasis on social skills believing that children with other limitations do better if they have good social skills.

We work to balance our desire to support inclusion with a realistic assessment of the current challenges in the group. We understand the necessity to address the needs of all children in the group, not just the needs of the children with identified diverse or unique needs. There is a continual effort towards making reasonable accommodations, modifying and adapting activities and routines, to embrace differences and abilities.

Sometimes the process results in a determination that a child is no longer deriving the benefits from the program that will help them maximize their potential. An alternate early childhood environment may be seen to be more beneficial for a child's or parents' needs. There is reflection of what did or did not work and what needs to be in place for future success. The crucial question is how can we best help meet the basic human need to belong, to participate, and to contribute.

Days of operation: Monday to Friday, 52 weeks, except statutory holidays

Hours of operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., **except:**
Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve **when we close at 3 p.m.** ☞

Age groups: Preschool - 2 ½ through 5 years
 School-age - 6 through 12 years

Our Staff

Our staff is made up of qualified Early Childhood Educators and assistants who are dedicated to providing a quality program for your child. Only adult employees, 18 years of age or older, can be alone with a child. Direct unsupervised access is not permitted for volunteers or students completing placement hours. The operators of East Toronto Village Children's Centre support staff development, providing employees with in-house workshops and reimbursing the costs for field-related courses.

Critical Staff Shortage

Although it has never occurred since the Centre was incorporated, ETVCC has a procedure to follow if unable to meet mandatory teacher/child ratios. We always maintains a group of capable supply teachers familiar with our children and have a working agreement with Nursery Support Services and Healthcare Resources, 2 providers of qualified child care personnel to cover last minute staff shortages.

In the unlikely event of a critical staff shortage ETVCC will:

- 1) Call part-time parents to inform them care is cancelled for the day.
- 2) Call full-time parents and tell them our concerns about meeting ratios. Parents will be asked if they are able to keep their child home, with no charge for the day if they are able to find other care.
- 3) Cancel trips requiring less children per teacher.
- 4) Once ratios are met we will not allow any more parents to leave their children. There will be no charge for the day if care can not be provided.

Parents

Parents or other family members are welcome to participate in the program at any time. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher if you wish to bring your energy and enthusiasm on a field trip or if you have something you would like to share with us in the Centre. If you have any questions, concerns or comments, speak with one of your child's teachers or the Supervisor as we want you to feel that this is your day care centre also. The Board of Directors is mainly comprised of parents whose children are enrolled at the Centre and you are encouraged to attend a Board meeting as they are enjoyable and fulfilling. You may very well find yourself wanting to join. There are many other ways that you can help us as well, i.e. from time to time we will issue a list of recyclable items we need collected or we may be asking for your help with fundraising projects. Please try to fit some of these things into your busy schedule as they are all things that help our Centre to run smoothly, making this a better day care for all.

Parents Participating in the Program

There are guidelines that must be followed when participating in the program. You can never be alone with other people's children. If a child needs to use the washroom, for example, let a teacher know. You can encourage appropriate behaviour with other people's children but if a situation calls for discipline turn that responsibility over to an ETVCC teacher. When you are with your child on a trip **you** are responsible for ensuring **you and your child** follow the group rules at all times. The Centre supplies all participants with lunch. If you have special diets or allergies, please feel free to bring your own nutritious lunch (peanut & nut free). If, on a trip, you wish to purchase food or other items, wait until you have a break away from the children. If you need to smoke, again wait until you have a break away from the children and staff. Smoking is prohibited anywhere on ETVCC/St Saviour property.

Volunteers and Students on Placement

Volunteers are people who spend scheduled time during regular operating hours at the Centre, bringing with them their enthusiasm, energy, skills and experiences to benefit the program free of pay. For our purposes the title 'volunteer' does not apply to parents or family members occasionally accompanying a child on a trip or for a special event at the Centre, who are considered to be participants in the program, or Board members, who do not receive pay but attend after regular operating hours.

Be assured every child in attendance is supervised by an adult employee of ETVCC at all times. Only employees of ETVCC shall have direct unsupervised access to the children, meaning no one who is at that time volunteering or completing student placement hours can be alone with a child. Our policies and procedures are reviewed with volunteers and students on placement before they begin and at least annually afterwards and a Police Reference Check is required for all volunteers and students having direct contact with children at ETVCC.

Our Child-Centered Play-Based Program

Our preschool revolves around three main play areas: the cognitive areas, which have floor and table activities, books, writing materials, measuring tools, indoor sand and water play, as well as teacher directed activities; the arts and craft areas, which stock a variety of paints, papers, glues, textured items, modeling materials and include sand and water play; and the gross motor areas involving climbing apparatus, covered outdoor sand area, large blocks, and equipment for riding, pushing, pulling, music and movement. Our outdoor yard is well shaded. Inside or out, your child will have a variety of activities which he/she can choose from during free-play time as well as group activities. We incorporate some major field trips as well as neighbourhood outings into our program. Examples include Cassels Park and splash pad, the Glen Manor nature trail, Ted Reeve's skating arena and the library. Our goal is to provide a stimulating program that challenges each child at his or her own developmental level.

Our school-age provides care before school, at lunch time and after school as well as full-day care for professional development days and school holidays. The program is a combination of arts and crafts, computer activities, drama, cooking, construction toys and other games as well as outdoor sports and activities and outings. The goal of the program is to provide a relaxing atmosphere where the children may choose their own level of activity and have opportunities to develop friendships.

Nursery School / Kindergarten Preparation / Part-Time Care

ETVCC is aware of the need for flexible child-care arrangements facing many families. We offer a variety of schedules with some limitations: If your part-time schedule includes care after 3:15 p.m., a family needing full-time space will be given priority. The parent of a part-time child will be given 2-weeks written notice to accept full-time service, adjust their schedule so the child is picked up before 3:15, or withdraw the child. The parent using the Centre's services part time will be offered a first chance to obtain the full-time space.

Part-time children only attend on their planned days. Part-time schedules are cancelled on school holidays, PD days, or school strike days and at the end of June part-time schedules become void. Having said that, children **may** be able to attend on unplanned days or days when schools are closed depending on the vacation schedules of children enrolled full time as well as the children's school schedules. Speak to the Supervisor about the availability of care.

Fees

Fees are based on the fixed costs associated with operating ETVCC. Reimbursements are not provided for closures due to statutory holidays, or reduced operating hours due to something (eg. water or power outage) out of our control.

Fees are subject to change by approval of the Board. The Board will provide families with as much notice as possible for fee increases to allow for financial planning. A minimum of one month's notice will always be given. In general, fees will be increased a minimum of 1% annually to cover increased costs.

The Current Fee Schedule for full-time care, nursery school, kindergarten preparation, and other part-time care is attached.

Non-refundable Registration Fee	\$25.
Non-refundable Fee to Hold a Spot For More than 2 Weeks	\$25.

Fee Change In the Event of a Labour Disruption at a School Board

Due to the fact that extra costs are incurred by the Centre in the event of a school labour disruption such as a strike or lock-out the school-age daily fee is increased. For each day your school-aged child does not attend school due to a school strike the daily rate is increased by \$5.

Available Subsidies

Government subsidies are available to those families requiring it. Parents must make subsidy arrangements with the Toronto Children's Services Office.

Fee Payments

Fees are due in advance and are paid by post-dated cheques for the periods: September to the end of December, January to the end of June, and July to the end of August. In the case of summer camp, where the child does not attend on a regular basis, fees are due at the time of registration. Cheques are to be dated for the beginning of each weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly period.

Payment is based on enrolment. If you have registered for a specific time and your child does not attend you are still responsible for the fees for that time. We regret we cannot give refunds for days absent, holidays, or illness as we have our expenditures for staff and other essentials regardless of these situations. For these same reasons there is no discount for those families with two or more children enrolled.

Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Cheques

Accounts for which NSF cheques are returned will be subject to a \$25 charge. Repayment of the NSF cheque must be paid in full by the 15th of the following month. If ETVCC receives two 2 NSF cheques within a 12-month period, fees will only be accepted in the form of cash or money order.

Overdue Account Policy

The overdue account policy applies to all families regardless of whether they are:

- full fee families
- subsidized families who pay a daily fee contribution
- subsidized families who have exceeded their allotted absences and as such are responsible for the centre's full fee daily rate.

Any fees not paid in full by the end of the month to which they apply will be subject to an administration charge of \$10 per account. The account becomes 'overdue' and the parent/caregiver is considered to be 'not in good standing' with ETVCC.

Process for Payment of Overdue Accounts

The Supervisor will contact the parent/caregiver and will determine a payment plan/date for any fees in arrears. Failure to provide fee payment by the agreed upon date will result in discharge from the centre on 2 weeks' notice. Should extenuating circumstances exist, it is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to discuss this with the Supervisor or a Board member. A review of whether or not an extension of childcare services can be granted will be completed. This review may include a meeting between the Supervisor, Treasurer, Board member, and /or parent/caregiver at the discretion of the Supervisor/Treasurer.

Any overdue account/NSF agreements do not release the parent/caregiver from the regular monthly fee payments. If an extension of childcare services and a repayment plan has been established the parent/caregiver may be required to pay current fees in the form of cash or money order.

If discharge occurs, ETVCC will continue to pursue and collect upon any overdue accounts. If necessary, legal action will be taken.

Admission and Withdrawal

A visit to the Centre will be arranged to familiarize you and your child with our program and staff. If teachers have concerns about your child's readiness to begin our program they will recommend a 3-day to 1-week trial period to further assess. After the trial the Supervisor will meet with you to set a start date or to set goals to work on for a future admission date.

On admission and on an annual basis the parent will be required to complete the green *Emergency Information Card*. Printing must be clear and easy to read as this card is taken with the child on all trips and it is where teachers look for names and numbers in the event of an emergency. Be sure you do not use a marker or ink that runs when wet. Regular ball-point pen works well. We recommend you provide a picture of your child with his or her eye colour and information about any distinguishing features written on the back to be kept in your child's file. With your permission we would release the photo to police if there was a crisis.

The following required documentation must also be submitted on admission:

- General Information form, including work information and emergency contact information
- Immunization and health information forms
- Emergency Medical Release and Local Field Trip Consent forms
- Parent/Caregiver Agreement to indicate compliance with ETVCC policies and procedures

On an annual basis the parent will also be required to update the *General Information Form*, *Health Information Form*, *Local Field Trip Consent Form*, and *Emergency Medical Release Form*. If a trip involves the use of transportation or any type of swimming you will be required to complete a separate *Special Field Trip Consent Form* for each individual trip. On your child's first day we encourage you to stay with your child for a while in order to reassure him/her and minimize fears. You are welcome to call at any time to find out how your child is doing.

There is a period of adjustment during the first 3 months of care. This type of group care, with the large space, family grouping, and transitions, may not suit all children. The teachers will assess the situation and communicate on an on-going basis, especially if your child is unhappy or not thriving in our program.

If your child starts during school holidays you may be asked to have an adult accompany your child on the first few 'big' trips. These special trips are once per week. It takes time for your child to be able to recognize the teachers and other children in the group and it takes time for the teachers to become familiar with your child's habits. Extra vigilance is needed on these trips that are further afield and the safety of your child is our main concern.

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given one month in advance. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged. The paid notice period may be reduced if we have a family on the waiting list able to take the spot sooner. A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child, but you can request to have your child put on the waiting list. East Toronto Village Children's Centre may terminate services if policies are not followed or fees not paid.

In September, if there are not enough school-age spaces for the preschool children moving into grade 1, children aged 10 to 12 may be asked to withdraw to allow the younger children to stay. The constant supervision at ETVCC is especially important for the younger children.

The Centre will maintain a waiting list when all spaces are full. Parents registering children who have siblings already in the Centre will be given preference on the waiting list. Fill out an application to be on the waiting list early in case there are a number of siblings ready to enroll at the same time.

Discharge Due to Breaches of ETVCC Policies

Upon admission into ETVCC, families are in good standing. However, breaching **any** of the policies outlined in the handbook places the family at risk of being found **NOT** in good standing with ETVCC. The Board of Directors reserves the right in its sole discretion to discharge any child for breaches of any of ETVCC's policies. Said breaches, by either the child or the parents/caregivers include, but are not limited to, infractions related to:

- Policies and Procedures Regarding Child Behavioural Expectations
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Fee Payment
- Late Pick-up
- Equity & Diversity

In extreme cases (as determined by the Supervisor with approval from the President or Member/President-Designate of the Board of Directors) of violent or threatening behaviour by either a child or a parent/caregiver where the safety of other children and/or the ETVCC staff are at risk, the two (2) weeks notice of withdraw is waived. The Supervisor and the President (or designate) will meet with the parent/caregiver immediately and the parent/caregiver will be required to withdraw the child from ETVCC at once.

Arrival and Pick-Up

Young children depend on regular routines for their sense of security. We recommend that you establish regular times for arrival and departure from the Centre. Please escort your child (both preschoolers and school-age children) into and from the room or yard area where his or her group is at that time. Make sure that the teacher knows that your child is here or is leaving.

Parents need to sign their child/ren in and out each day. It is important that you relay all messages to the teachers at arrival and departure times. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the *General Information Form*, so please make sure that you tell us, send a note, or call that day if someone else is picking up your child.

Whenever a parent is with a child **the parent** is responsible for directing and disciplining his or her child. As a parent you must follow through with directing or disciplining your child yourself--whether picking up, dropping off, staying for a visit, or attending a trip.

Sometimes, usually at pick-up time, children are just too excited about your arrival to calm down and play within the expected boundaries. If this is the case, for example if your child is running in the room unable to focus on an activity, please see it as the time to go home. Transition times are often a time of upheaval for many children. It may be too much to expect your child to be able to settle down and behave appropriately at that time. As well, as soon as one child starts 'winding back up' often other children follow suit which isn't the tone the teachers are trying to establish at pick-up time.

If a trip is scheduled for your child's group, have your child at the Centre one-half hour before the departure time. If this is not possible, call by 9 a.m. to let us know. If you are arriving closer to the departure time, assist your child to prepare for the trip *before you leave* (sunscreen applied, Centre T-shirt on, bathroom, knapsack packed and ready). No alternative care can be provided for children who arrive after their group has left for an outing or field trip. Never drop your child off at a trip location without having made previous arrangements with the teachers on the trip.

Children must be escorted into and from the Centre by an adult or designate at least 14 years of age. The escort needs to sign the child in and out on the parent form and also needs to make sure a teacher is aware the child is arriving or departing.

As the Centre is closed at 6 p.m. it is important to make sure you allow time to help your child prepare to leave before 6 p.m. That means all dressed and leaving the building by 6 p.m. We welcome parents to relax and spend time with their children in the program but the last ½ hour of the day is a difficult time. The teachers are trying to assist the children to settle down to quiet transitional activities. At the same time they are making sure they are aware of and recording children who are leaving as well as passing on vital information to parents before they leave.

We want for parents to take the time to talk to one another, share ideas, form friendships, but please do it outside the building when it is close to closing time so ETVCC teachers can leave on time. A few minutes can mean the difference between a missed GO train, missed bus, or an on-time arrival for a night school class or other commitment.

Our Centre is open 10 ½ hours per day which is quite a long time for children who are here from opening-time until closing-time. The faculty at ETVCC endeavour to be respectful of the different needs of children through the ebb and flow of each day but often it is difficult to lessen the necessary routines, the stimulation, and the activities generated by a large group. Younger preschoolers especially tend to be vulnerable to long hours in care. If you or the teachers find

your child is exhibiting behaviours that indicate s/he is overstressed by too long of a day, try to take every opportunity you can to shorten the hours in care.

Absence or Arrival After 10 a.m.

Parents are required to call the Centre by 10 a.m. if their child will be late, not in for the day, or not at school where we expect to pick them up. This allows the staff and cook to know how many children for which to prepare. Also, failure to alert the Centre that a child is not required to be picked up from school requires a serious occurrence report to the City and Province as a child is classed as ‘missing’ if s/he does not arrive for a scheduled pick-up by ETVCC staff. The schools do not inform us if a child is absent and by the time we realize the child is not coming out of the school the teachers and office staff are usually not available. If parents cannot be reached police will be informed.

Set out below is a chart outlining the steps to be taken by ETVCC in response to the number of times a parent/guardian has failed to inform us their child was not to be picked up from school:

Occurrence #: Step:

1	Supervisor gives parent/guardian a verbal reminder about the need to phone.
2	Supervisor prepares a warning letter, a copy of which is signed by the parent.
3	\$25 fine and a letter stating that in the event of a 4 th incident there will be an additional \$25 fine and the issue will be referred to the Board who will determine if the parent remains ‘in good standing’, a decision which could lead to the discharge of the child from ETVCC.

Toys from Home

We cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys if they are brought to the Centre. We recommend that your child not bring toys from home. Groups occasionally have days scheduled where all of the children can bring in something special from home to share.

Mail Boxes

Each family has a mail box assigned to them for important messages, notes, newsletters, meeting announcements, etc. Please check your mail box on a daily basis.

Security Card System

Parents and other child escorts are required to use security cards which allow access to the front door of the building during normal operating hours. The buzzer is for visitors; use by parents greatly increases the noise level in the Centre and disrupts the programs being provided by the teachers.

Cost for the first card is included in the \$25 registration fee. If that card is lost or stolen the Centre must be notified immediately and you are required to pay \$10 to purchase a replacement card. For each additional card you need, for example if different people drop-off or pick-up your child, the \$10 deposit/s you give to ETVCC are refundable upon the card/s being returned to ETVCC together with the first one that was included in the registration fee. All cards must be returned when a child is withdrawn.

Guardianship / Custody Agreements

If a parent instructs ETVCC staff to only allow limited access by the child’s other parent, a notarized copy of the court order, outlining the terms relevant to ETVCC policies and

procedures, must be submitted to ETVCC to be kept in the child's file. It is the responsibility of the child's parents to provide ETVCC with a copy of any subsequent court orders regarding custody or access.

ETVCC requires written permission from the custodial parent whenever deviations to the court order are requested. The custodial parent must complete a *Form to Allow a Child to be Picked Up by a Non-Custodial Parent on a Day Not Allowed in the Court Order on File at ETVCC* each day in which a change to the court order is requested. Phone messages will not be accepted.

**East Toronto Village Children's Centre
Late Pick-Up Policy and Fine System**

East Toronto Village Children's Centre closes at 6 p.m. Late pick-up of children is hard on both your child and the staff. You must make sure that alternate arrangements are available if you cannot be here before 6 p.m. There will be an initial fee of \$1. per minute charged for parents who have not left the building with their children by 6 p.m. **If a child is not picked up by 7 p.m. and the parents have not called and we have not been able to contact them or the emergency persons listed on the child's information form, the child is deemed abandoned and we will call the Children's Aid Society.**

The late pick-up policy applies to all parents/caregivers authorized to pick-up children, regardless of family structure. Each late pick-up of a particular child is considered an occurrence regardless of which parent/caregiver picks up the child. For example, if Mom is late to pick-up the child twice and Grandpa is late to pick-up the same child once, there have been three occurrences.

Set out below is a chart outlining the strictly enforced steps to be taken by ETVCC in response to the number of late pick-ups:

Occurrence #:	Step:
1-3	A fee of \$1.00 per family per minute late will be charged and the late log must be signed by the parent/caregiver acknowledging the lateness.
4-6	The fee is raised to \$5.00 per family per minute late, and the late log must be signed by the parent/caregiver acknowledging the lateness.
7	The fee remains at \$5.00 per family per minute late, and the late log must be signed by the parent/caregiver acknowledging the lateness. Additionally, a written notice will be given to the parent/caregiver advising that upon occurrence #8, they will receive two (2) weeks written notice to find permanent alternative care.
8	The fee remains \$5.00 per family per minute late, and the late log must be signed by the parent/caregiver acknowledging the lateness. The parent/caregiver will receive two (2) weeks written notice to find permanent alternative care. The parent/caregiver must sign an acknowledgement that they have received this notice.

Late fees will be charged in all situations as our staff must stay regardless of their plans and therefore must be compensated accordingly. The late fine may be paid by cash or cheque directly to the staff person who remained with your child. Late fees must be paid in full within 3 business days. Late fees revert back to step 1 after a period of 6 consecutive months of ongoing compliance with centre hours.

Escorting Children To and From Area Schools

Children traveling between the Centre and classes at Kimberley, Beaches Alternative (BAS), St. John and Adam Beck Public Schools are escorted by the staff at ETVCC. Due to the distance between the schools and the Centre our ability to offer escort services to morning or afternoon kindergarten sessions at Adam Beck and St. John can change from year to year. Speak to the Supervisor when you are arranging your child's kindergarten schedule to make sure we are able to provide an ETVCC escort, especially if your child will be attending a school other than Kimberley or BAS.

Enrolment at ETVCC does not guarantee a child will be able to attend one of the schools we serve. If a family lives outside the districts for the schools we serve a parent has to apply for *Optional Attendance* with their school of choice.

If parents have their children attending a school other than Kimberley, Beaches Alternative, St. John or Adam Beck, then they are responsible for making their own arrangements for their child/ren to be escorted by an adult or designate at least 14 years of age into and from the Centre.

Supervision on School Property

Parents need to be aware of who is responsible for children who attend school, when they are on school property.

For children attending Kindergarten ETVCC policy is that our teachers stay with the children until the bells go when escorting to school, and that they are in the Kindergarten yard when the departure bells ring. However, ETVCC teachers may leave the majority of the children under the supervision of Board of Education teachers if, for example, they need to escort a day care child who needs something back at the Centre.

For children attending grades 1 – 6 at Kimberley or BAS, 15 minutes prior to the morning and afternoon entrance bells there are Board of Education teachers on yard duty at the schools serviced by ETVCC. During these times, if children are going to school before the bell rings the ETVCC teacher leaves the school yard once the children have been dropped off. In the morning the group usually goes over just before the bell rings. At lunch time the group usually splits. Children wanting active outdoor time are left in the care of the Board teachers. A second group follows just before the bell rings. If you want your child to be in the care of ETVCC teachers throughout the lunch period provide the request in writing and your child will go with the second group.

For children attending grades 1 – 6 at Adam Beck or St John the Board of Education teachers are responsible for these children as ETVCC's escorting teacher is responsible for and stays with the Kindergarten children.

Suspension From School Guidelines

ETVCC does not provide care during the hours a suspended child would have been in school.

Daily Care

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing and according to the weather. Each child needs a complete change of clothing (top, long or short pants, socks, underwear and sweater) at the Centre. Please use a cloth bag for the extra clothing and label all clothing and the bag. To avoid accidents we require that the PS children wear rubber-soled shoes at day care and clogs, crocs, or sandals with no back are considered unsafe on the playground. Also, please choose runners with velcro fasteners if your child has not yet mastered laces.

To allow your child to feel comfortable and at ease while exploring his or her environment, dress your child in clothing that is suitable for active/messy play and allows the child to dress and undress themselves as easily as possible.

Diapers

All articles needed to meet a child's diapering needs are supplied by the child's parent/s including disposable diapers and/or pull-ups, wipes, any creams or powders to be used, and a carrying/storage bag.

Sleep

It is a requirement of the *Day Nurseries Act* that all preschool children have access to a rest time. At ETVCC on-going communication between parents and teachers allows for awareness of each child's individual needs. JK and SK age children have the option to engage in quiet activities for the entire rest period. Occasionally, after a busy summer morning for example, it may be determined that all of the children would benefit from a lie-down, with calming music, a mat, and the option of having at a book, for 30-45 minutes. Some children can be reluctant to settle but we think it is important for children to learn to be able to relax their minds and bodies. Whatever age your preschool child, if s/he benefits from a nap, please send a comfortable blanket and a cuddly toy for their rest.

Nutrition

Our meals are planned in accordance with *Canada's Food Guide*. A nutritious meal is served at lunch time as well as a well-balanced breakfast in the morning and a snack in the afternoon. Our policy is to encourage the children to try some of everything to broaden their tastes but we do not insist that children finish each meal. Neither do we withhold foods for not eating another part of the meal. The weekly menu is posted on the parent board in each program room. Special dietary restrictions are to be discussed in advance of enrolment with the Supervisor.

All juice served to the children is 100% unsweetened juice.

As young children have a difficult time understanding why one child has something that they cannot have children are not to bring food from home to the Centre. If you want to provide a special snack for the whole group it must be arranged through the cook and items must be sealed in their original package with an ingredient label. Homemade birthday cakes cannot be brought to the Centre as it is impossible for staff to monitor the ingredients.

If you arrive with your child after lunch has been served, and did not call ahead to say you were coming late, lunch may or may not be available. If lunch is available and you would like your child to have the lunch, you are required to sit with your child until s/he is finished eating.

Health Care

Anaphylactic Policy

ETVCC is a PEANUT and NUT AWARE Facility -- Nuts or Peanuts are Not Allowed

Foods containing nuts, peanuts, or nut products are not allowed at ETVCC. Never send foods containing nuts or peanuts to the Centre with your child. If you do wish to send food, on a birthday for example, leave it in its original package with the contents labeled. The Supervisor/Supervisor designate has the discretion to restrict or allow other foods being brought to the Centre.

Anaphylaxis is a severe life threatening allergic condition that can quickly lead to a fatal reaction known as anaphylactic shock. Foods with peanut and nut products or being stung by certain insects are the most common but there have also been children enrolled at ETVCC with severe allergies to other foods containing wheat, fish, or dairy products.

ETVCC will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies but faces limitations including the large number of children attending the Centre and the fact that the facilities are shared with other organizations.

As tenants in a shared space the operators of ETVCC do not claim to be, nor can be deemed to be, free of foods and non-food items that may lead to a severe allergic or anaphylactic reaction. ETVCC may decline to admit a child where the operator is not comfortable that the level of risk posed by a child's condition can be reasonably accommodated at the Centre.

ETVCC Will Administer Medication (Epi Pen) Prescribed by a Physician Providing the Parent/Caregiver:

- inform the centre in writing of any life threatening allergies at the time of admission or whenever they become aware of their child's medical condition
- provide the child's Epi Pen and complete a medication consent form
- provide instructions from the physician to be used as an 'action plan' for Centre staff
- keep the centre staff informed of any changes in allergies
- educate their child regarding the need to avoid foods to which he/she is allergic

Information about children with severe allergies is posted in each room in a visible place, included on the Emergency Information Sheets kept with the teachers at all times, and noted on the daily attendance sheets. The Epi Pen's are stored in an easily accessible place and are taken on all field trips.

Although our usual policy is that children do not bring food on trips, for parents with children who have severe food allergies we do give the option of providing snacks if the group may be purchasing food at a site (where contents are less controlled).

Health Records

Each child is required to have their immunizations up to date before admission to East Toronto Village Children's Centre. Each child must have an *Emergency Medical Release Form* signed by the parent in order for us to obtain emergency medical help in case of illness or accident. If a child needs emergency medical help we would escort him or her by ambulance or taxi to hospital.

Illness

When attending the Centre children should be in good health and must be able to participate in the full program, including outdoor activity time. Our concern, in all cases of illness, is the welfare of the sick child and the health of the other children in our care. Therefore, children may not attend the Centre when they are ill.

Following are some examples of symptoms which require that a child be kept at home:

- fever higher than 37.7 ° C / 100 ° F (under arm), especially if persistent or higher
- diarrhea or vomiting
- undiagnosed rash or skin condition, especially if accompanied by fever or behaviour change
- discharge from the eyes, ears, or nose, especially if thick or coloured
- lethargy, irritability, drowsiness if accompanied by another symptom
- cough if frequent bouts of three to five times per hour, especially if choking or vomiting
- persistent pain or ear ache
- breathing difficulty (breathing faster than 40 breaths per minute)

A receiving staff member who notices any of these symptoms when a child arrives will ask that the child be taken home or to a doctor. If any of these symptoms is normal for the child, and the Centre can accommodate the child without harm to the other children, the child may return with a doctor's note explaining the situation.

A child must stay at home if diagnosed with any contagious diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, roseola, gastroenteritis, impetigo, or conjunctivitis. ETVCC refers to Toronto Public Health's *Guidelines for Common Communicable Diseases* to determine the period of exclusion.

If your child becomes ill during the day it is expected that someone will come to pick the child up as soon as possible. We will first attempt to contact the parents and if we are unable to reach the parents we will contact the child's emergency contact person noted on the child's information form. If an ETVCC staff person thinks it has taken an inordinate amount of time for a person to arrive to pick up a sick child the person will be required to document the reason for the delay on ETVCC's *Symptoms of Ill Health* Form. The need for a staff person to repeatedly request this documentation places the family at risk of being found not in good standing with ETVCC.

Medication Policy

Our staff will administer most prescriptions that a child requires provided that a parent completes a *Medication Authorization* Form. Prescription medication must be in the original container with the child's name, dose instructions, and current date on the pharmacy label. "Over-the-counter" drugs must be accompanied by written approval by a medical doctor which includes the child's name, dosage, time to be administered and length of use. ETVCC staff do not apply medication or do health care procedures on rectal or genital areas.

When "time to be administered" is stated to be "as needed", for example in the case of an asthma inhaler, the doctor must provide clear written instructions regarding:

- a] the specific symptoms the teacher needs to observe when determining if the medication should be administered, and,
- b] the maximum number of doses allowed in a specified period.

Teachers do not administer the 'relievers' (eg. Ventolin) day after day on a regular basis.

Unless the doctor's letter specifically instructs otherwise, we only administer 'relievers' if symptoms are apparent. If the instructions on the 'controller' (eg. Beclomethasone) say "2 times per day", parents give both doses at home. *Any* instructions that differ from those on the prescription label must be included in the doctor's letter.

Head Lice

Head lice are tiny insects that live on the scalp. They lay eggs, called nits, which stick to hair very close to the scalp. Head lice are very common in child care centres and schools because they spread easily among children who are together in one place. Head lice do not spread disease.

If a child has live lice a parent will be called to pick the child up. Parents are given information from Toronto Public Health about how to treat the problem. Children cannot return to the Centre until the live lice are gone. Parents must be prepared to stay for a while at drop off time the day after their child had live lice to allow us to do a thorough head check before the parent leaves. Please respect that a teacher may not be available to do the check the minute you arrive.

Sun Screen

On admission parents complete a *Sun Screen Information & Permission Form*. On days when needed parents of all children who use sun screen must apply a coat prior to the child arriving at the Centre. ETVCC provides sunscreen for preschoolers if a second application is needed. Parents are required to supply an individual bottle of sun screen, clearly labeled with the child's name, for school-age children needing additional applications.

Weather Alerts (Cold / Heat / Sun / Smog / Electrical Storms)

The staff at ETVCC will take the following steps on a daily basis to provide protection from extreme weather conditions:

Listen and Watch for Weather Alerts on the TV or Radio

Conditions warranting consideration include:

- Cold weather reported forecast temperature of 25°C below zero (without a wind) or colder OR any combination of wind and temperature that is 25°C below zero or colder
- Severe ice or sleet weather conditions
- Blizzard or other severe snow-fall conditions
- Electrical storms
- Smog/Pollution/Heat – smog alerts are issued by Environment Canada when the Air Quality Index reaches or exceeds 50
- School Closure – part-time care at ETVCC would be cancelled
[If either Board of Education closes schools mid-day it is the responsibility of the parent to pick his or her child up from school]

Determine the Need to Modify Activities and/or School Escorts

Our goal is to maintain normal operations with a special emphasis on escorting children in grades 1 through 6 to all the schools we serve. However it may be decided that one or more or all of the following are in the best interests of the children and staff:

- Cancellation or rescheduling of a planned outdoor activity or trip
- Cancellation of some or all school drop-offs and/or pick-ups

- Encouraging parents to pick-up as early as possible to allow ETVCC staff the additional travel time they too will need to manage their after-work arrangements

Make Information Available to Parents

- Prior to 7 a.m. the Supervisor and the a.m. preschool ECE will discuss the situation and make decisions regarding any changes to our normal operations
- If there are to be changes the Supervisor includes that information with the recorded message on the direct line to the office, 416-906-8957, accompanied by the date and time for the next information update – if there is no message by 7 a.m. we should be operating as usual
- If the message states ETVCC-escorted walks to school are cancelled parents are instructed to call their school if their child will be absent

Spontaneous Decisions

- Throughout the day ETVCC staff may alter decisions around outdoor play or escorting kindergarten children to school. These will not be included on ETVCC's phone message. ETVCC staff will contact the school to inform them which children will be absent if we make a spontaneous decision to cancel an escorted walk to kindergarten
- **The Supervisor/supervisor designate retains the right to at any time use his/her discretion in deciding whether or not to cancel or curtail or reinstate activities due to weather conditions including sending children home or not accepting them into care**

Smoke-Free Environment

ETVCC is committed to providing a smoke-free environment and is in compliance with the *Smoke Free Ontario Act*. Smoking is prohibited anywhere on the property. Please support our efforts to keep our surroundings tidy; do not deposit cigarette butts on or around the property.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an emergency at East Toronto Village Children's Centre, our emergency evacuation location is Community Centre 55 at Swanwick and Main.

Reporting to Children's Aid Society

Every person in Ontario is required under the *Child and Family Services Act* to report his/her suspicion that a child may have been abused or neglected or is at risk for abuse or neglect (i.e., in need of protection). Included and defined specifically are the "operator or employee of a day nursery." This definition includes all Centre staff. It is an offence under the *Child and Family Services Act* if a staff member does not report a suspicion of abuse or neglect. **Child care centre staff are directed not to inform a parent/guardian that a suspicion of child abuse has been reported** as such action could jeopardize the child and/or the investigation.

If a parent witnesses or suspects child abuse s/he too has a duty to report to a Children's Aid Society. Telephone numbers are posted in the Centre on red sheets with a large 911 and other emergency numbers on them.

If the person believed to have been abusive towards a child is someone who holds a working relationship with the day care (employee, volunteer, student, supplier, contract worker, etc) it

is appreciated if the parent informs an ETVCC Official (Supervisor, the teacher in charge of the Centre in the Supervisor's absence, or the President of ETVCC's Board of Directors) after the call is made to Children's Aid. We need to ensure the safety of all the children.

A parent's signature on ETVCC's *Parent Agreement* indicates s/he pledges to maintain ethical standards in respect to observing the strictest confidentiality regarding any accusations of child abuse against any person involved with the Centre (other parents, family members, family friends escorting children to and from the Centre, staff members, volunteers, students, community members associated with the day care, suppliers, etc). Discussing any information about the situation with others is a breach of confidentiality; doing so may interfere with the investigation and may leave the person passing on the information liable for slander. The need to inform Children's Aid and an ETVCC Official overrides this confidentiality agreement. After you inform the ETVCC Official of your call to Children's Aid s/he will also contact Children's Aid to get advice about how and to whom to discuss, or not discuss, the situation.

Child care centre staff, or anyone witnessing suspected child abuse, are not responsible for proving whether or not child abuse or neglect has occurred; that is the responsibility of a Children's Aid Society. A person reporting suspected child abuse cannot be sued if it is proven that the report was made in good faith and not to cause trouble for anyone. The child's safety must take precedence over all other concerns.

Policies and Procedures Regarding Behavioural Expectations

ETVCC believes in the right of each person to be treated with dignity and respect. Our goal is for parents, children, and educators to work together to enrich curriculum objectives and content; both parents and educators are seen as experts and resources in the process of providing care and education.

TEACHERS are Expected to:

- respect the rights of children and parents;
- help the children resolve their problems peacefully after an attempt has already been made to do so on their own;
- speak with parents on a regular basis, always keeping lines of communication open to discuss concerns to both parent and staff;
- discuss with a parent an incident that has arisen during the day, to expand on details and consequences and follow-up action;
- document all serious occurrences via incident reports and discuss with the parent immediately;
- recognize and help parents understand when our environment and our program is not suitably matched to an individual child's disposition or development; and,

ETVCC Staff Contravention of Behaviour Management Guidelines

ETVCC staff are expected to comply with ETVCC's stated policies and procedures and the requirements of the Day Nurseries Act with respect to behaviour management. Failure to comply will be dealt with by the Supervisor and a designated Board member. Students and other adults taking part in the programs of ETVCC are considered ETVCC staff and must abide by the same policies and procedures.

Monitoring and Recording Procedure

The ETVCC Supervisor will informally monitor each ETVCC staff member's behaviour management skills throughout the year. Observations are recorded every 6 months and the documentation is kept in the staff member's file. If concerns are noted the employee signs the documentation to verify knowledge of the concerns and requirements for compliance with ETVCC's Behaviour Management Policy.

Criteria to be considered when determining disciplinary measures with staff:

- Seriousness of the offence
- Actual or potential risk or harm to the child
- Past performance of the employee
- Frequency of occurrence
- Previous disciplinary action taken

In the event that immediate suspension or dismissal is not necessary, the centre's disciplinary procedures will be followed. Consequences may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, or termination, depending on the seriousness of the events.

CHILDREN are Expected to:

- respect the rights of others;
- settle problems in a peaceful manner, first on their own and, if necessary, with the aid of a staff person;
- show courtesy and respect to their peers and teachers; and,
- control their anger/aggression in such a manner as to not inflict any physical harm on their peers, teachers, or themselves

General Techniques Teachers Use in Effective Behavioural Management

ETVCC teachers ensure the children are fully aware of their expectations and the consequences of not meeting those expectations. Expectations are appropriate, meet the needs of the children in the group, and allow for flexibility for individuals within the group. Consequences are logical ones, which are directly related to inappropriate actions. Whenever possible, the children are involved in discussions of why the rules are important.

ETVCC Teachers use the following strategies:

- listen to the child and attempt to understand what had caused the problem
 - redirect behaviour if a child is having difficulty in one situation, and find an alternative for them without directing attention to the problems
 - use positive reinforcement, letting children know they are exhibiting positive behaviour
 - make shifts in arrangements to assist a child who is unable to do something or is hesitant in a new situation—for example, make sure his/her friends can assist and make it easier for the child
 - model appropriate behaviour
 - restructure activities if individuals or groups are encountering failure. Break down activities into small steps
 - provide the upset child with a quiet space within the room where s/he can be by him/herself to calm down or restrict space within reasonable boundaries
-
- tell children how to change their behaviour, thus they can then concentrate on what they should be doing rather than what they should not be doing
 - redirect the child to focus on a less stressful or more appropriate activity

- program age-appropriate activities. If children are not attentive to activity, it will be changed to capture their interest, or left for another time
- be aware of how situations must be reorganized on a continuing basis (e.g., move to smaller groupings, reinforce turn taking, monitor noise levels, etc.)
- remove the child's source of anger when possible and appropriate
- be receptive – ETVCC staff will take their cues from the children

Discipline will:

- relate to the nature of the inappropriate behaviour
- be appropriate to the developmental level of the child
- be designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behaviour
- be implemented as soon as possible after inappropriate behaviour
- be discussed with a parent if a difficult situation arises with a child

ETVCC will not permit:

- corporal punishment of a child by anyone (an employee, student, volunteer, any parent, another child, or a group of children)
- deliberate harsh or degrading measures to be used on a child that would humiliate a child or undermine a child's self-respect
- deprivation of a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing, or bedding
- use of a locked room or structure to confine a child who has been withdrawn from the other children

Serious Child Behavioural Occurrences

Our goal is to ensure that the children learn to deal with all day-to-day situations in socially acceptable ways, by means of communicating, reasoning and taking responsibility for their actions and learning what it means to live cooperatively in a democratic society.

Definition

A behaviour or series of behavioural occurrences that involves a child engaging in any persistent abuse (ie. kicking, punching, throwing objects, spitting, or any physical, emotional or verbal abuse) directed towards another child, an adult or him/herself.

Parent / Teacher Communication

Communication is the key as parents and teachers work together to reduce problem behaviours. Talking to one another at drop-off and pick-up is the most common way to relay information and share ideas. A respect for privacy or a need for more time to converse may make a phone conversation during the day or a time to meet in the office more helpful. When you do want to converse at the end of the day make sure you arrive in time to do so. After 5:45 is a time the teachers need to be able to concentrate on the signing-out and closing routines.

Forms Used to Clarify Communication

The following forms are often used by the teachers to clarify what has occurred and/or strategies to try to reduce reoccurrence:

ETVCC's *Report of Incident Concerning Child* is the format we use to provide written communication to parents about the behaviours defined above. If there has been more than

one incident report, we strongly recommend that you set up a meeting with staff to discuss solutions.

ETVCC's Report of Disrespect Towards a Teacher / Non-Compliance is the format we use for this type of behaviour. There may be no physical, emotional, or verbal abuse but it is still not acceptable. Disrespectful behaviours frequently extend to the other children, whose play and activities are often repeatedly disrupted. Our hope is that parents will share our goal of working to teach the children the importance of showing courtesy and respect to others.

ETVCC's Form to Clarify Individual Goals provides clarification when setting specific goals. When parents and teachers work together to provide realistic goals and follow them with positive reinforcement and consistent expectations we give the child a framework within which s/he can gain confidence and thrive to his or her full potential.

Guidelines for De-escalating Volatile Situations

ETVCC does not approve the use of any restraint as a method of intervention for children with challenging behaviours. However, in some extreme and rare situations staff may find themselves having to respond to a crisis situation using physical guidance as a method to defuse and/or de-escalate a volatile situation. Physical restraint is only used in situations where a child is in imminent danger of compromising the safety of themselves or others in the program. It is the first priority of the staff at ETVCC to make sure that we provide a safe environment for all children and families at the centre.

The following guidelines are provided to ETVCC staff to deal with children who are at risk of hurting themselves or others and are not intended to provide approval or endorse the use of physical restraint.

In order to de-escalate the situation:

- if at all possible ETVCC staff will direct the other children to a safer environment, keeping calm control, aware that their anxiety may be acute
- acknowledge and discuss with them the feelings of the rest of the children in the group, working to alleviate their fears
- if ratios allow, two ETVCC staff should stay with the volatile child until the child has calmed down

The following steps should be taken after the child has calmed down:

- reintroduce the child into the program in a supportive manner, remaining with the child until s/he is settled into an activity or task
- the staff who used physical guidance with the child will document the incident, sign the document and submit it to the Centre Supervisor
- ETVCC staff on duty to call parents of child involved
- Supervisor/designate to call the City of Toronto Serious Occurrence Line within 24 hours to report the incident
- Supervisor/designate to comply with the Child Abuse Reporting Policy if a child alleges they have been injured during the restraint
- Documentation is placed into the child's file permanently
- Supervisor/designate to call the President of the Board of Directors to report the incident
- Meeting with staff/Supervisor/child's parent(s) to discuss the incident and determine strategies which will be utilized should the child encounter a similar situation—parent's will sign off on both the incident report and the strategies
- Staff will keep the parents up-to-date, and visa versa, on the child's progress and to review the strategies

Discharge Due to Inability to Accommodate

In the event that, despite the best efforts of ETVCC staff in cooperation with a family to include a child/family (see *Statement of Inclusion*) at ETVCC, it becomes clear that ETVCC is unable to accommodate the child/family, the Supervisor will consult with the President or Member/President-Designate of the Board of Directors and the family prior to discharging the child/family from the Centre. If a decision is made to discharge the child/family it will be on two (2) weeks notice and our Children's Services Consultant will be notified.

Some areas, which may be examined by the Supervisor, the Board President or designate, and the family include the following:

- the documentation that will be kept on file at ETVCC;
- the severity of the issues resulting in the withdrawals. (ie. If the issue is behavioural, social, emotional, or violent) and to what extent support may be needed by the child/family; and,
- the opportunity to offer support to the child/family from various agencies that may be of assistance, and the willingness on the family's part to accept the support.

In the event that there is an extreme behavioural concern that is potentially harmful to other children and/or staff the child/family may be asked to leave ETVCC immediately without two (2) weeks notice.

Our aim is to provide a stimulating program with as much choice and freedom as possible, but which also provides a place where children can relax and feel safe.

Parent Code of Conduct

PARENTS are expected to :

- respect the rights of staff, children, and other parents;
- adhere to the Centre's philosophy and policies as found in the *Family Handbook* and on the parent bulletin boards;
- work to keep the lines of communication open and flowing between parents and teachers;
- make an effort to understand what is expected of your child;
- make an effort to understand what opportunities for growth and what challenges our environment and our program present to your child;
- take responsibility for your child's care and behaviour as soon as you enter the room and ensure that all rules continue to be followed; and,
- show courtesy and respect to your child's teachers

ETVCC will neither tolerate nor condone attitudes and behaviours, regardless of intent, that are likely to undermine the dignity, self-esteem or security of an individual, or create an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive environment.

Those behaviours deemed unacceptable can include the following:

- unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, taunts, or other discriminatory language
- practical jokes which cause someone embarrassment or discomfort
- display of offensive pictures, graffiti, or other materials
- racial or ethnic slurs
- attempts to goad or incite aggression or violence in others

- throwing of articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner
- aggressive approaches to another individual or group
- behaviour frightening to the children

- invasion of another person's personal space causing the other person to feel threatened or out of control of the situation
- threats and/or attempts to intimidate
- aggressive gestures (i.e. raising one's fist, wagging a finger in someone's face, swear-word or insulting gestures)
- physical assault

Procedure for Handling Contraventions to the Parent Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors and Supervisor of ETVCC reserve the right to enforce immediate disciplinary measures as the situation may warrant. This may include the following:

- removing the offender from ETVCC property/premises immediately and barring the individual from coming onto or in the ETVCC property/premises.
- the police may be called for direction/assistance.
- the Children's Aid Society may be called for direction/assistance.

The following steps will be taken once the code of conduct has been breached:

- the Supervisor will document and report the incident immediately to the President or Member/President-Designate of the Board of Directors, Ministry Licensing Specialist, City of Toronto Children's Service, police, or The Children's Aid Society as necessary.
- the Supervisor and Board of Directors/designate committee will meet as quickly as possible to discuss and assess the incident/situation. The following criteria (some or all) will be used to assess the situation:
 - impact of incident on ETVCC staff and children
 - seriousness of the offence
 - actual or potential risk/harm to child(ren) or adults
 - past documentation or ETVCC staff reports of problems with family involved
 - frequency of occurrence and
 - any previous disciplinary action taken.

Consequences of Breaching ETVCC's Code of Conduct

The following decisions may be made by the Board of Directors/designate committee:

- further investigation by members of the Board of Directors
- verbal warning
- written warning
- requirement for parent to sign ETVCC's *Parent's Code*
- discharge on two (2) weeks notice
- in extreme cases, immediate discharge.

Appeals

Once the decision of the Board of Directors has been communicated, the person(s) involved in the incident will be given 5 working days to discuss/appeal the decision of the Board of Directors. The Board will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible and establish a process to consider the appeal.

In the case of a decision to discharge the family from the program, either immediately or with notice, by a designate committee consultation will be made with the entire Board of Directors.

Any documentation and formal correspondence related to the family will remain in their file. Any family who has been found to have contravened this policy and received a verbal/written warning from ETVCC will be viewed as not in good standing with ETVCC. This means that future contraventions of this policy or other difficulties with the family may necessitate ETVCC to immediately discharge the family from ETVCC.

Financial Reimbursement

If the parent committing an offence is responsible for any destruction, damage or defacing of ETVCC property, or the property of any person connected to ETVCC, the offending parent will be invoiced for the full cost recovery of repair of damages (materials, labour, plus an administrative charge). As such an act constitutes a criminal act the police would be called.

Communication Statement

Open communication is encouraged at East Toronto Village Children's Centre. We strive to create an atmosphere where parents feel as if the Centre is theirs. We hope all people involved will feel comfortable speaking with the teachers, the Supervisor, or the members of the Board of Directors whenever they find themselves with questions, concerns or comments. At times however there are issues about which people can feel especially sensitive, making communication difficult. When communication breaks down, problems can escalate, making resolution more difficult.

Concerns and Complaints

Any parent/caregiver, ETVCC staff, student, or volunteer is experiencing difficulties at ETVCC and wishes to address their complaint/concern is responsible for arranging an appointment with the Supervisor by telephone or in person at ETVCC. Complaints and concerns must always be discussed in a private and orderly manner. Please contact the Supervisor to arrange a time to discuss the matter. At any point in this process, a parent/caregiver may speak to a Board Member about a concern or complaint.

ETVCC will not tolerate families/ETVCC staff/volunteers voicing complaints/concerns:

- in the presence of children
- during program time
- in a manner that is threatening or demeaning to the ETVCC staff, student, volunteers, or other families
- with other children.

It is the responsibility of families and ETVCC staff to set a good example and work together to provide a safe and secure environment where every child, family, volunteer, and ETVCC staff member feel safe and comfortable.

Informal Resolution

Often people are not aware that their words or actions are negatively affecting others. If a staff/Board member receives a message of dissatisfaction from anyone concerning ETVCC, the first step is to approach the situation informally. Helping those involved talk about their points of view and encouraging their attempts to find solutions that satisfy all is the mediator's role. If the person receiving the concern believes support would be helpful, he or she will inform the Supervisor who will contact the person or group voicing the concern, investigate the specifics, and try to help resolve the issue.

If an issue is resolved through the informal approach, no documentation is needed and the information is classified as a “comment”.

If an issue cannot be resolved at the first level and proceeds further to the Board of Directors, City of Toronto or MCSS, the information is classified as a “complaint”.

Complaint Procedure

The appropriate person(s) involved and the Supervisor/Board member will discuss the complaint/concern and resolution(s). Appropriate timelines should be discussed if necessary. All meetings and discussions will be documented using ETVCC’s Complaint Inquiry Report.

If the complaint/concern is not resolved within the appropriate timeline agreed or within 10 working days of the discussion, either party or the Supervisor will take the matter further through a letter of complaint/concern to the ETVCC Board of Directors.

Letters of Complaint/Concern

All letters of complaint/concern shall be addressed to a Board member, placed in a sealed envelope, and provided to an ETVCC staff member. All letters must include:

- the name of the person writing the letter
- the date
- the issue/concern/problem
- efforts to resolve the issue
- requested resolution.

The ETVCC staff receiving the letter will date and initial the envelope, and forward to the appropriate party.

Once a Board Member has received a letter of complaint an Investigating Committee will be struck and will meet as soon as possible to start an investigation. No person(s) involved in the complaint/concern will be a part of the Investigating Committee. The Supervisor/designated Board member will compile the Complaint Inquiry Report and other documentation for the Investigating Committee.

Following completion of the investigation, the Investigating Committee will make recommendations and/or a final decision in writing within the policies and guidelines of ETVCC in response to the letter of complaint/concern. Every attempt will be made to accomplish this within 20 working days of receiving the letter of complaint/concern.

The Investigating Committee members may discuss the letter of complaint/concern with relevant members of the Board and Corporation.

All persons should respect that the Board of Directors are volunteers, usually parents, of ETVCC and use their personal time to fulfill their duties as Board members. There may be a delay in response to letters and your patience and cooperation is greatly appreciated. Families, staff, students, and volunteers have the right to discuss any questions or concerns regarding ETVCC with the Licensing Specialist from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. An ETVCC staff member can assist parents with the name and phone number of the Licensing Specialist.

Serious Occurrence Notification

A Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted at the front entrance within 24 hours of ETVCC becoming aware of an occurrence. The exception is a case of allegations of abuse or unverified complaints which will be posted at the completion of Children's Aid Society and/or Ministry investigation. The information included will be written in a way that protects personal information and privacy. No child or staff names, initials, ages, birth dates, or preschool/school-age group identifiers will be included. The form will be updated if additional actions or investigations are completed. It will remain posted for a minimum of 10 business days after the last update and will be retained on site and available for current and prospective parents for at least 2 years from the date of the occurrence.

Equity & Diversity Policy

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Discrimination, intimidation, interference, harassment, restriction, or coercion exercised or practiced with respect to any employee, student, volunteer, or family member because of age, race, creed, national origin, gender, political or religious affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, or ethnic origin will not be tolerated. The following principles guide our quest to ensure equity and embrace diversity:

1. ETVCC recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and will ensure equal rights for all.
2. ETVCC values the diverse backgrounds of our community and is committed to an understanding that our multifaceted society is a source of enrichment and strength.
3. ETVCC believes that it must take informed leadership in attaining equality and positive relationships among all participants in the Centre.
4. ETVCC acknowledges the barriers to employment, education, as well as other social and economic opportunities experienced by members of many minority groups. We strive to eliminate these barriers.

ETVCC is committed to demonstrating these principles in all policies, community relations, delivery of services, recruitment, hiring, and ETVCC staff, volunteer, and student development. ETVCC will actively communicate this commitment to all participants.

PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, EDUCATION & TRAINING

The following are some of the ways ETVCC strives to avoid discriminatory incidents by addressing anti-bias proactively:

- Programs, activities, and program materials reflect the diversity of the membership and promote respect and appreciation of differences.
- Participants from diverse racial and ethno-cultural backgrounds are included and encouraged to contribute to planning and implementing programs and activities.
- Resource materials such as flyers, films, and books are anti-bias and actively promote respect for diversity.
- ETVCC staff and Board members regularly review and adapt programs to ensure that they are free of discrimination, racism, and stereotyping.
- ETVCC's Equity & Diversity Policy is posted in each program room to make all participants aware of our expectations.

- ETVCC offers time and financial support for training and education through workshops to provide Board members, ETVCC staff, and volunteers with information to help evaluate their own possible prejudices and to acquire the knowledge and skills to deal with instances of discrimination.
- Anti-bias workshops may be offered to family members and parents are welcome to suggest presenters.

PROCESS TO INVESTIGATE AND MANAGE ISSUES RELATED TO THE EQUITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

As proactive as we strive to be, incidents may still occur and to prevent recurrence, it is important that they be dealt with immediately, using the following guidelines:

- If a situation of intolerance occurs it is expected that neither the incident nor the resolution will interfere with the day-to-day operation of ETVCC.
- It is expected that all families and ETVCC staff work with each other to resolve any disputes in an open, honest, and professional manner.
- Any incidents of discrimination will require ETVCC to complete all reporting requirements as per ETVCC's Serious Occurrence Policy & Procedures.

Resolving Incidents when Children are Involved

Due to the young ages of the children the onus for reporting or responding to an incident falls to the adults, including staff, parents, Board members and any other adults involved in the program.

Where possible, children who were involved are encouraged to report it to an adult (e.g., teacher, Supervisor, parent). In all situations, parents should be informed by the program if their child has been involved in an incident.

In the case where the parents are aware that their child was involved in an incident and/or personally witnessed the incident, or if another parent witnessed the incident, the parent should make a written or verbal report to the Supervisor who will then take immediate action in resolving the incident.

At the outset, staff should try to resolve the matter by talking to the children and explaining why the behaviour is inappropriate. Some key elements of this process are to:

- recognize the individual children's ages and stages of their understanding
- handle communications in a manner intended to foster the self-worth of all the children involved
- publicly support the targeted child and acknowledge the hurt they have suffered to help the child re-establish self-esteem
- determine if it would be best to speak to the targeted child and the offender individually
- remember that the objective of speaking with the offender is to correct the behaviour, not to punish, and the offender should be assisted in seeking appropriate ways to express themselves
- be aware of other children present at the time and try to facilitate learning by talking to those children and explaining why the behaviour is inappropriate

Teaching children about the inappropriateness of this type of behaviour may involve group activities, group problem-solving, program and curriculum development, or other

preventative methods, which may include teaching positive interactions and conflict resolution skills.

If the incident involves Child to Child:

First Incident

1. ETVCC staff speaks with children involved.
2. ETVCC staff documents the incident in the daily log, using first names only.
3. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the Supervisor.
4. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the parent/caregiver.
5. Strategies to educate and prevent further occurrences will be brought to the forefront when program planning.

Second Incident

1. ETVCC staff speaks with children involved.
2. ETVCC staff documents the incident in the daily log, using first names only.
3. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the Supervisor.
4. Supervisor meets with parent/caregiver to discuss the issue and develop a plan of action if behaviour were to occur again.
5. The meeting is documented by the Supervisor and the parent/caregiver signs for acknowledgement.

Third Incident

1. ETVCC staff speaks with children involved.
2. ETVCC staff documents the incident in the daily log, using first names only, and completes incident report.
3. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the Supervisor.
4. Board President is notified that 3rd incident has occurred.
5. Supervisor meets with the parent/caregiver to discuss the implementation of the plan of action previously determined (Supervisor may request that a Board member be present).
6. Meetings are documented by Supervisor and parent/caregiver signs for acknowledgement.

Resolving Incidents when Adults are Involved

The following types of incidents of discrimination may be viewed as violations of ETVCC's *Parent Code of Conduct* and as such may be dealt with under the guidelines of that policy.

If the incident involves Family Member to Child:

1. ETVCC staff speaks with the child involved.
2. ETVCC staff documents the incident in the daily log, using first names only, and compiles written documentation.
3. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the Supervisor.
4. ETVCC Board President is notified that an incident has occurred.
5. Supervisor and a representative from the Board meet with the offending family member to discuss the issue and the consequences if another incident occurs. ETVCC's *Parent's Code* is reviewed and the offending family member is required to sign it. If a second incident occurs, and at the discretion of the Supervisor and Board, the family member may no longer be allowed onto or in the ETVCC property or premises.
6. Meetings are documented by the Supervisor and the offending family member signs for acknowledgement.

7. Supervisor contacts the family of the child involved and discusses the issue.

If the incident involves Family Member to Family Member:

1. ETVCC staff documents the incident in the daily log, using first names only, and compiles written documentation.
2. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the Supervisor.
3. Board President is notified that an incident has occurred.
4. Supervisor and a representative from the Board meet with the offending family member to discuss the incident and the consequences if another incident occurs. ETVCC's *Parent's Code* is reviewed and the offending family member is required to sign it. If a second incident occurs, and at the discretion of the Supervisor and Board of Directors, the offender may no longer be allowed onto or in the ETVCC property or premises.
5. Supervisor contacts the targeted family member involved to provide an update on the investigation with consideration of the need for confidentiality with regards to the offender.
6. Meetings are documented by Supervisor and offending family members sign for acknowledgement.

If the incident involves Family Member to Staff Member:

1. ETVCC staff walks away from the situation.
2. ETVCC staff documents the incident in the daily log, using first names only, and compiles written documentation.
3. ETVCC staff verbally notifies the Supervisor.
4. Board President is notified that an incident has occurred.
5. Supervisor and the ETVCC staff member along with a Board member meet with the offending family member to discuss the issue and the consequences if another incident occurs. ETVCC's *Parent's Code* is reviewed and the offending family member is required to sign it. If a second incident occurs, and at the discretion of the Supervisor and Board of Directors, the family member may no longer be allowed onto or in the ETVCC property or premises.
6. Meetings are documented by Supervisor and offending family member signs for acknowledgement.

Resolving Incidents when the Offender is a Staff Member

The following types of incidents of discrimination may be viewed as violations of ETVCC's *employee/employer agreement* and as such will be dealt with in that context. Consequences may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, or termination, depending on the seriousness of the incident and/or prior occurrences and/or prior disciplinary actions.

If the incident involves ETVCC staff to Family Member or Child:

1. When Supervisor is notified, the incident is documented.
2. Supervisor meets with staff member to discuss incident.
3. Supervisor and the family member, or parent if towards a child, meet with staff member to discuss the issue. The meeting is documented by Supervisor and family member or parent signs for acknowledgement.
4. Supervisor meets with staff member to discuss consequences of this incident and what they would be if another incident occurs.

5. Meetings with staff members are documented by Supervisor with documentation going to the employee's file, and the Board President is informed of the outcome.

If the incident is between staff members:

The handling of discriminatory incidents between staff is consistent with ETVCC's *Workplace Anti-Harassment Policy*. However, if children or parents observe and report such an incident, it is appropriate to take similar actions to those noted in the preceding sections.