

# Swamp Willow Preschool False Creek Community Centre



## Parent Handbook 2026-27

1318 Cartwright Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3R8

**Preschool: 604-257-6997**

**Childcare Manager: 604-257-6998**

**Waitlist Inquiries: <https://falsecreekcc.ca/childcare-waitlist/>**

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## **1. History of Swamp Willow Preschool**

In 1979, after many months of organizing, Swamp Willow Preschool began as a parent participation Preschool. Classes were first held in the meeting room of a housing complex, which is now the Montessori School. Preschool parents and teachers lobbied for a permanent Preschool room to be built within the proposed False Creek Community Centre and were successful. Swamp Willow has been running successfully at the False Creek Community Centre since 1980, providing a caring and enjoyable learning environment for preschool-aged children.

## **2. Philosophy**

### **Children**

We strongly believe in the benefit of learning through play. Children are unique and have individual ways of expressing themselves and their knowledge. We believe in the importance of an inspiring and aesthetically appealing environment which will invite children to try new things, excite their curiosity, promote creative play and work together. Throughout the program, there will be group time as well as activities that promote small groups playing and working together as well as space for individuals who may need some space on their own. We provide the children with a safe and supported environment in which to explore and build relationships with peers and teachers alike.

We teach children to respect themselves, others and the environment. Turn-taking and problem-solving skills are modeled and encouraged.

All children have the right to be included and be given the opportunity to develop physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. We believe that diversity and inclusion enhance the preschool experience.

### **Families**

We work collaboratively with families to ensure the growth and healthy development of their children. We believe that families' involvement in a child's educational experience is important to their sense of well-being and contributes to their educational success. Families will be informed about their child's progress, challenges and achievements on an ongoing basis.

Families may find it helpful to reach out to other families, teachers and health professionals for assurance or questions on issues of interest. We welcome the opportunity to share information and experiences.

### **Teachers**

Our teachers have all the qualifications required by Child Care Licensing and are licensed by Vancouver Coastal Health. Our teachers also engage with ongoing training and workshops to learn, be inspired and bring more knowledge back into the preschool.

### **3. Structure of the False Creek Community Centre**

The False Creek Community Association jointly operates the False Creek Community Centre with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. The Association is a non-profit society and consists of fifteen elected volunteer board members whose responsibilities include setting policies for the operation of all childcare services within the Centre.

### **4. Program Description**

Swamp Willow Preschool is a licensed program with two early childhood-licensed teachers and a maximum class size of 20 children. Through observations and interactions of experienced teachers with the children, a collaborative curriculum develops. Generally, themes such as apples, bears, and winter will be rotated every two weeks throughout the year.

As the classroom is a shared space, it is set up each morning with an inviting freshness that encourages children to explore through play. Circle time, where the class sits together on our circle time carpet, involves the sharing of songs, poems, stories and the children's ideas. Circle time, as with the rest of our program, is specifically planned to meet the needs and interests of each class. Carefully chosen literature is a part of the program as it supports the children's inquisitiveness and curiosities.

The preschool program provides opportunities for both indoor and outdoor active play, creative activities, dramatic play and movement, experimentation, investigation, music, books, stories, and poems. Program time is flexible, but the order of activities is quite regular. This flexibility allows for spontaneous and unpredictable events that add such joy to a preschool day.

### **What Does It Mean To Be A Licensed Preschool?**

Swamp Willow Preschool is licensed by Community Care Facilities Licensing and Childcare Licensing Regulation which is part of Vancouver Coastal Health. The preschool has met all the requirements set by our health authorities, including teacher qualifications and safety standards, and holds a valid preschool license. A Child Care Licensing Officer conducts regular inspections to ensure all regulations are being met and to advise preschool teachers and managers on important matters.

## **Insurance**

The operations of the False Creek Community Centre and the False Creek Community Association are indemnified/insured by the City of Vancouver.

## **Children to be Served**

The majority of the three and four-year-old children attending Swamp Willow Preschool reside in the False Creek, Fairview Slopes, and Kitsilano neighbourhoods. Children from all areas are welcome.

## **5. Enrollment and Fees**

A child enrolled in the three-year-old program at Swamp Willow Preschool must be 3 years old by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> of the year they attend. Similarly, in the four-year-old program, the child must be 4 years old by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> of the year they attend. All children attending Preschool should be toilet-trained.

Children attending the 3-year-old program will receive priority registration into the 4-year-old program the following year. Parents will be notified by the Childcare Manager when it is time to register.

Children enrolled in the 4-year-old program will receive priority registration into our Out of School Care program, though a spot is not guaranteed. Spaces will be given on an “as available” basis.

### **5.1 Registration Packages**

Licensing requires the Preschool to have the items below before your child can attend. Registration packages are sent out in June for the children enrolled in the upcoming school year.

- **Registration form** – Please attach a copy of your custody agreement if applicable
- **Small emergency consent card** – Please fill out all contact information on the front and sign the back.
- **Immunization form** – Please attach a copy of your records if you have them
- **Credit card authorization form** or 9 postdated cheques dated for September to May and one cheque dated for no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 as your deposit. (Please confirm the amount with the childcare manager before writing cheques)
- **Parent Agreement** – After reading the parent handbook (which can be found at <https://falsecreekcc.ca/licensed-childcare/> ) please sign the agreement form.
- **Waiver for Seesaw and walk form**

## **5.2 Fees**

**2026/2027**

**Three-year-old class (Tues/Thurs 9:15-11:30 am) - \$168.00/month**

**Four-year-old class (Mon/Wed/Fri 9:15-11:45 am) - \$209/month**

To reserve your spot, we require a registration fee and a deposit. The registration fee of \$25.00 is non-refundable. The deposit is one month's fees and becomes your last month's fee. If you leave before the end of the school year, it will be applied to your last month, provided you give at least 1 month's written notice of your withdrawal. Notice must be given before the first of the month to apply. If you complete the school year, your deposit will be applied to your June payment.

Your fees may be lower due to our participation in the Provincial Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI). We will participate in this program as long as it is offered to us through the provincial government.

If you are paying by Visa or Mastercard, please complete the appropriate form to authorize credit card withdrawals. Parents will need to ensure the correct credit card information is on their Vancouver Recreation account. The card will need to be attached to the account of the person whose card will be used, not the child's account. We will only be storing the last four digits of your card. Please follow the steps below to update your card information. **A \$30 late fee will be charged if payment does not go through on the 1st of each month. Repeated late payments may result in the termination of services.**

If you are paying by cheque, we require nine cheques dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, September through May. Cheques are to be made out to the **City of Vancouver**. There is a \$30.00 charge for cheques returned N.S.F. Please confirm fees with the childcare manager before writing your cheques.

### **5.3 Setting up Payments**

**If you do not have a login** for your account, you can sign up in the right-hand corner at [https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver/ActiveNet\\_Login](https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver/ActiveNet_Login) . You'll need to create an account for yourself and your child. After you've set up accounts, you can follow the steps below. If you have any questions, please contact the Child Care Manager to help you set up your account.

**If you know the login** for your account, please follow these steps to update your card information. (Once your card is saved on your profile, just return the attached form to the staff.)

1. Go to [https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver/ActiveNet\\_Login](https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver/ActiveNet_Login) and log in to your account.
2. Go to "My Account" on the top right corner of the page
3. Go to "My saved Credit Cards" under the account activity list in the left hand column.
1. Add your card information and save.

### **5.4 Tax Receipts**

The receipts for tax purposes are available on your Vancouver Recreation Account. These receipts show your payments for preschool fees. We do not have access to your tax receipts.

### **5.5 Subsidy**

The Province of British Columbia is committed to helping families obtain affordable, accessible, safe, quality childcare. The Child Care Subsidy is a monthly payment that assists eligible British Columbia families with the cost of child care. Monthly subsidy payments vary depending on your family's circumstances. Please contact the Subsidy Service Centre for more information and if you may be eligible:

#### **Child Care Subsidy Service Centre**

PO Box 9953 Stn Prov Govt Victoria,  
BC V8W 9R3  
Phone: 1-888-338-6622  
Fax: 1-877-544-0699

Application forms can be found online or from the Child Care Manager. We encourage parents and guardians to apply for subsidy during the summer before the school year begins. **Parents may request subsidy for earlier months within the same calendar year (e.g., a request submitted in December may cover September–December). However, once a new calendar year begins, requests cannot be made for any months in the previous year.**

Families on subsidy are still responsible for paying the non-refundable registration fee, as well as the deposit. Please make sure that you meet your deadline for filing with the Child Care Subsidy Service Centre as we require their confirmation on all amounts you are eligible to receive prior to the first of each month that fees are due. If we do not have this confirmation, you will be required to pay the fees in full and receive reimbursement for them once we receive confirmation. Families are also responsible for ensuring that their subsidy forms are kept up-to-date. The monthly fee will be calculated based on the maximum subsidy received by the family.

### **5.6 Late Pick-Up Fee**

A late fee of \$10.00 per 15-minute period (or part thereof), and \$1.00 for each additional minute thereafter, will be charged if you are late picking up your child after Preschool. A late form will be issued by one of the teachers, and the payment must be arranged with the childcare manager before the next preschool session.

If a child is repeatedly picked up late, they may risk losing their spot in the program. Families will be given written notice with a final warning. If they are late again, they will be removed from the program.

### **5.7 Withdrawal**

**One month's written notice is required** when withdrawing from the program, to be provided by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the previous month. (i.e. Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> notice for Feb.1<sup>st</sup> withdrawal). Please submit your letter to the Child Care Manager. If a child is temporarily withdrawn for vacation or illness, the full month's fees must be paid to reserve the space.

### **5.8 Termination of Services**

Termination of services may be required should one or more of the following situations arise:

- Fees are not paid according to the Payment Agreement
- The family does not abide by the expectations in the Parent/Guardian Agreement and successful resolution of the differences has not been achieved.
- A family member harasses, threatens abuse or commits a violent act towards a staff person, child or other family involved in the program.
- Problems of late pick up have not been satisfactorily addressed.
- The child's behavior is consistently and severely disruptive and/or puts at risk the welfare of other children, families or staff.
- Prior to termination of services, efforts to find additional supports to accommodate the child in the program will have been undertaken and such supports are found to be either unavailable or not successful.

## **6.1 Teacher Profiles**

### **Maya Sadeghi (she/her)**

My name is Maya Sadeghi and I'm the Swamp Willow Preschool's supervisor.

I have a background in art, and creativity is a huge part of my life. I've completed my Early Childhood Educator Certificate and Special Needs Early Childhood Education Diploma at Douglas College, which has deepened my love for supporting all children in meaningful ways. I am passionate about creating a safe, supportive, and creative environment where children can explore, be curious, and practice their social skills. Outside of work, I'm a chef at home, a proud mom to my cat and dog, and completely obsessed with gardening.

### **Jesselyne Regala (she/her)**

Hello, I am Jesselyne. I have been part of the False Creek Community for over 3 years. First, as a parent, then creating and instructing the children's program, "Circle Time Fun," and, more recently, working with preschoolers at Swamp Willow.

I strongly believe in the benefits of play-based learning and offering space for children to explore and express themselves.

## **6.2 Practicum Students and Volunteers**

Occasionally, we are joined by students currently enrolled in an Early Childhood program or volunteers who are interested in early childhood education. Students and volunteers are here to observe the program, participate under the supervision of the preschool teachers and practice planning activities for the children. All students and volunteers have been vetted in the same manner as our staff. Parents and guardians will be notified when a student or volunteer visits the program.

## **7.0 Orientation**

### **BEGINNING SCHOOL**

Entering preschool offers important new experiences to a child. It means leaving the comfort of their familiar home and relying on new caring adults beyond their immediate family. It means finding a place for themselves in a group of other children about their own age within a new environment, this could include new toys, washroom arrangements and new routines.

The child's feeling of confidence in themselves and their environment will be strengthened as they adapt. For many children, attending school can enhance their sense of trust already fostered in the home and neighbourhood.

Here are a series of steps that are taken to help a child enter preschool. Attending school for a short period of time with their adult may be an important first step for the child. It should be emphasized that a young child should not be left at preschool without ensuring their readiness. It may be requested for an Adult to remain with their child on the first day if needed.

### **7.1 Gradual Entry**

Open House – The children and their families visit the preschool when it is not in session to become acquainted with the physical space and to establish a relationship with the teachers. For the returning children, it is an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the room and to say hello to their friends and teachers.

#### **For 3's Program ONLY:**

##### **Week 1** *(Please bring a labeled water bottle)*

Your child will attend from **9:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (45 minutes)**. This shorter visit allows your child to become familiar with the classroom, teachers, and routines. We encourage parents/guardians to say goodbye and leave if their child is comfortable exploring independently.

##### **Week 2** *(Please bring a labeled water bottle and snack)*

Your child will attend from **9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. (1 hour)**. Children will continue building relationships with teachers and classmates while becoming more comfortable with the daily preschool routine.

##### **Week 3**

Your child will attend from **9:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. (1 hour 30 minutes)**. As children gain confidence, they will participate in more classroom activities and have additional opportunities to engage with their peers.

##### **Week 4**

Your child will attend from **9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. (2 hours)**. Children will continue settling into the preschool environment and following the regular classroom routines for a longer portion of the morning.

Please note that every child adjusts at their own pace. If additional gradual entry time is needed, staff will work closely with your family to develop a plan that best supports your child's individual needs.

## **Three Year Olds**

Our 3-year-old program starts on Thursday, September 10th (please see gradual entry schedule on previous page).

During the first week, families are invited to join a brief circle time at the beginning of class. Following circle time, families are welcome to leave for the remainder of the session. If a child requires additional support during the transition, families and educators can work together to develop strategies that help the child feel safe, comfortable, and confident participating independently.

### **Gradual Entry Schedule**

#### **Week 1 (bring labeled water bottle)**

9:15 to 10 AM (45 minutes)

#### **Week 2 (bring labeled water bottle and snack )**

9:15 to 10:15 AM (1 hour)

#### **Week 3**

9:15 to 10:45 AM (1 hour and 30 minutes)

#### **Week 4**

9:15 to 11:15 AM ( 2 hours)

## **Four Year Olds**

Our four-year-old classes will start on the Wednesday after Labor Day (September 9, 2026) and run from 9:15-11:45.

Please note, there is no scheduled Gradual Entry for the 4's program as the majority of the children attended the three-year-old program and are familiar with the teachers and the program. If your child did not attend the 3-year-old program and you are concerned about your child settling in, a parent/guardian is welcome to discuss strategies with the educators. The goal is for your child to feel as comfortable and safe as possible within our preschool space.

### **3 and 4 year old's Starting in the middle of the Preschool Year**

If your child is starting mid-year, families are welcome to set up a meeting to see the classroom and meet the teachers by emailing [tabatha.marin@vancouver.ca](mailto:tabatha.marin@vancouver.ca) or calling 604-257-2997. If you feel your child would benefit from a gradual entry schedule to adjust to preschool, please talk to the teachers to make arrangements.

### **7.2 Separation and Transition into Preschool**

Our primary goal is to help every child feel safe, secure, and comfortable within our preschool environment. As children build trusting relationships with us, the educators, and become familiar with classroom routines, they develop the confidence and independence needed to participate successfully on their own.

To support a positive transition, we follow a gradual entry process. After this gradual entry period, families may be invited to remain in the classroom for a short period of time, typically 10–15 minutes, while their child settles into the environment. If a child continues to require additional support following the gradual transition period, families and educators will work together to discuss strategies that promote a successful separation experience while supporting the child's sense of security and belonging.

While we are committed to respecting each child's pace, we must also maintain a consistent routine that supports the well-being and learning of all children in our program. If a parent or guardian remains in the classroom beyond the typical transition period on an ongoing basis, additional arrangements may need to be considered. In accordance with licensing requirements, any individual who regularly remains in the classroom is required to complete a Criminal Record Check, obtain a Responsible Adult Certificate, and present other requested documentation.

We encourage open communication throughout the transition process and welcome families to share any questions, concerns, or observations with educators. By working

together, we can create a positive preschool experience that supports each child's growth, confidence, and independence.

Below are some helpful resources about preschool transition and separation anxiety:

- Books:
  - *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
  - *Wemberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes
  - *The Pigeon HAS to go to School!* by Mo Willems
  
- Activities:
  - Rocking-Rolling: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2020/rocking-rolling>
  - Toolkit: <https://www.theotttoolbox.com/tricks-to-help-with-separation-anxiety-preschool/>
  
- Resources:
  - <https://launchpad-ee.com/preschool-separation-anxiety-signs-and-solutions-for-parents/>
  - <https://abccdc.com/abc-windsor/blog/2024/08/12/simplify-preschool-dropoff-windsor/>
  -

## **8.0 Preschool Schedule**

### **Preschool Program**

At the beginning of the school year, we establish a routine for each class. This routine helps the children feel secure and gives them a sense of the passage of time. A regular session of preschool consists of four basic parts: outdoor play, free play, circle time, snack time.

During free play time, each child may choose to paint, work on puzzles, play at the water table, look at books, build with blocks, use manipulative toys, pretend in the dramatic center, or visit the art center. At circle time, all the children and teachers sit in the circle area. Stories may be read from a book or told by the teacher through the use of flannel board or puppets. It may also be a time for songs, finger plays, basic musical instruments and body movement.

Preschool concludes with a short goodbye circle time. The preschool door is then opened by one of the staff and families form a line as each child is called from Circle Time to go home.

### **Typical Day at Preschool**

This is a general outline of our daily routine. It will occasionally change for special events, field trips and moments where flexibility is required.

- Arrival / Good morning Circle Time \*Please arrive on time!
- Outdoor Play
- Washroom / Wash Hands (children may use the washroom at any time)
- Snack Time
- Free Play / Clean Up
- Book Time / Goodbye Circle
- Dismissal \*Please arrive on time!

\*Please plan to arrive 5 minutes before drop-off and pick-up of your child's class time. This is very important for children to experience all aspects of the program with their peers, as well as expect their adult to be there when children are being dismissed. It can be an upsetting experience for a child if they are not picked up at the same time as their classmates. This is important throughout the school year but especially important at the beginning of the school year.

### **Punctuality for Drop-Off**

We kindly ask that all families do their best to arrive on time (**9:15am**) each morning. We start our day with a Good Morning Circle, where children review their schedule and participate in a grounding group experience that helps them transition into the day successfully.

When children arrive late, it can interrupt the flow of the circle and take away from the experience of the children who arrived on time and are already engaged in the activity. Your support in ensuring timely arrivals helps create a positive and consistent start to the day for everyone.

9:15 - **Please arrive on time as Circle Time will start soon at 9:20am.**

A teacher will open the outside gate to welcome children into the classroom. Please make sure that the teachers are aware of your child entering the program. Families will have 5 minutes to help their children settle into the space. We encourage families to support their child's independence by allowing the child to put their own backpack on the backpack hooks. Children keep their jackets or other attire on for outdoor play.

9:20 - Good Morning Circle

Children will then be asked to find a spot on the edge of the carpet for Arrival / Attendance Circle Time. At this point, families are encouraged to say their goodbyes in order to allow transition into Circle Time. This circle is an important part of our daily routine, as we review the schedule for the day and prepare for the activities ahead. Establishing a consistent routine helps children feel secure, confident, and successful in the preschool environment.

9:30 - Outside Play

We spend time outdoors every day for a minimum of 30 minutes. Therefore, we recommend that children come prepared with weather-appropriate outdoor gear, such as a rain suit or Muddy Buddy, rain boots, gloves, and a hat. Being properly equipped helps ensure that children can comfortably and fully enjoy outdoor play in all weather conditions.

10:00 - Circle Time

Songs, stories, poems and fingerplays are shared during circle time that are centred around the theme of the week. Children are invited to participate in circle time activities, share their ideas, and join in singing and movement.

10:20 - Snack

Please pack your child's snack in a container they can open and close independently. Using child-friendly containers helps build confidence and independence during snack time. We encourage families to practice opening, closing, and packing snack containers at home to help children feel comfortable and successful at preschool.

Children wash their hands and eat their snacks from home with their peers and teachers. Please send healthy snacks along with a water bottle.

Free Play

After snack, children are invited to play with a wide variety of activities, such as blocks, dramatic play, books, puzzles, cars, and animals, which will be set out. In addition, an art activity will be set up for children to participate as they wish.

11:20 - Clean up

Children will clean up the room together and gather on our circle-time carpet for a final story or song.

**3-year-olds** - 11:30 - The outside gate will be opened for pickup. Children are asked to remain seated on the carpet until a teacher calls their name. This ensures every child goes home with their trusted adult. Please encourage your child to wait for their name.

**4-year-olds** - 11:30 - Once a month, your child will have the opportunity to bring **one favorite book** and **one special item or toy from home** to share with the class. During sharing time, the child will be invited to talk about their item and tell us why it is special to them. The teachers will read the chosen book to the class, giving each child a chance to share something meaningful from home and build confidence speaking in front of their peers.

Please watch our newsletter for your child's scheduled sharing day.

**4-year-olds** - 11:45 - The outside gate will be opened for pickup. Children are asked to remain seated on the carpet until a teacher calls their name. This ensures every child goes home with their trusted adult. Please encourage your child to wait for their name.

*\*Please note that this schedule is subject to change depending on the energy level, interest, and attention span of the group.*

## **Pick-Up Procedure**

To support a safe and smooth pick-up, we ask families to enter the classroom one at a time. An educator will call your child when you arrive at the door. We encourage children to remain seated on the carpet until their name is called to help ensure all children are safely accounted for.

## **Punctuality for Pick Up**

To support a smooth and safe dismissal, we ask families to arrive a few minutes before pick-up time. We understand that unexpected delays can occur; when possible, please arrange for an authorized adults or another family from the class to pick up your child if you are unable to arrive on time. Written authorization must be provided in advance.

If you are going to be late, call the classroom phone at 604-257-6997. If no one answers, please call the childcare manager's office: 604-257-6998

If the child has not been picked up 30 minutes after the program closes and we have not heard from or been able to contact anyone, staff must inform the Administrator and Child and Family Services is to be called

## **9.0 Preschool Hours & Closures**

Three-year-olds:	Tuesday & Thursday	9:15 - 11:30
Four-year-olds:	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	9:15 - 11:45

### **Holiday and Preschool Closure**

Preschool fees remain the same during periods that include holiday closures, including statutory holidays, winter break, spring break, and June for administrative purposes. Preschool will also be closed on False Creek Elementary Professional Development Days to allow for our Out of School Care program to be provided on those days

The Preschool will be **closed** on the following days during the 26/27 year:

Sep. 07/26 - Labour Day  
Sep. 08/26 – PRO-D  
Sep. 21/26 - PRO-D (TBC)  
Sep. 30/26 - Truth and Reconciliation Day  
Oct. 12/26 - Thanksgiving Day  
Oct. 23/26 - PRO-D (TBC)  
Nov. 11/26 - Remembrance Day  
Nov. 20 - PRO-D (TBC)  
Dec. 21 - Jan 4/27 - Winter Break  
Feb 12/27 - PRO-D (TBC)  
Feb. 15/27 - Family Day  
Mar. 15 - 25/27 - Spring Break  
Mar. 26/27 - Good Friday  
Mar 29/27 - Easter Monday  
Apr 19/27 - PRO-D (TBC)  
May 21/27 - PRO-D (TBC)  
May 24/27 - Victoria Day  
June 18/27 - Last day of class

**\*Preschool closes one week before the public schools in June for administrative purposes.**

**\*False Creek Professional Days will not be fully confirmed until August 2026. All dates will be posted in our monthly newsletter. Please be sure to check the newsletter for updated closure days.**

## **Emergency Closures**

In the event of a snow day or building closure, parents will be notified by phone, email, and/or our Seesaw app before the program starts. Parents may also call the front desk at 604- 257-8195 to confirm if the Centre is open or closed.

Swamp Willow preschool will follow the school board for snow day closures, so if False Creek Elementary is closed, so are we.

## **Closure Refund Policy**

If the facility closes for less than 15 days in a row, in one month

- No refund or credit is provided.

If the facility closes for more than 15 days in a row, in one month

- A prorated amount will be applied to the next month's fees
- The child's spot in the program will be held until reopening and no additional fees will be charged. If a parent decides to withdraw after a full month's closure, a refund of any held deposits will be given.

## **10.0 Attendance**

The Preschool program begins at 9:15 a.m. Please make every effort to arrive by this time so that your child has the full opportunity to participate in all the activities planned for the morning. If your child will be absent, please email [swampwillow@vancouver.ca](mailto:swampwillow@vancouver.ca)

### **10.1 Absence**

If your child is absent, due to illness or vacation, the fees remain the same. We cannot refund or credit fees for days missed.

### **10.2 Authorized Pick-up People**

If an alternate person will be picking up your child and they are not on the authorized pick-up list, please notify the teachers and email the Childcare Manager with that individual's full name. Teachers will ask for ID at pick up. Authorized people listed on your child's registration form may pick up your child without written notice, but the teachers appreciate prior notice.

### **10.3 Custody Agreements**

The program expects all information provided by the enrolling parent/legal guardian to be accurate. If a family has a custody agreement or court order, a current copy of the legal document must be given to the staff. The staff will follow only the access or pickup instructions in the custody agreement unless otherwise directed by a court order. Both parents must agree and notify the staff of any changes to pick-ups.

When custody has not been legally determined, and a conflict between the parents/guardians is evident, we will be unable to care for your child unless both parents/guardians sign a written agreement authorizing pick-up people and providing accurate information about the child.

## **11.0 General Information**

### **11.1 Toys from Home**

Please leave your child's toys at home, as they easily get mixed up with classroom equipment and could become lost or broken. Children are welcome to bring toys for show and tell on their assigned day in the 4-year-old class.

### **11.2 Clothing**

At preschool, we like to explore and have fun, which sometimes means getting messy. Please send your child in comfortable 'play clothes' as we like to paint and create, which may leave spots on clothes. Please ensure everything that comes to preschool is labeled.

Feel free to send a change of clothes in your child's backpack or in a labeled bag in your child's cubby in case they need a change of clothes.

Please send your child appropriately dressed for the weather, as going outside is a regular part of our program. Licensing requires us to have 30 minutes of outdoor play every day except in extreme weather. Rain pants are great when the weather is cooler and wet. Mittens can be kept in jacket pockets or in backpacks in case your child gets cold.

Teachers are not permitted to put on sunscreen. If you are concerned about sun exposure, please apply sunscreen before preschool.

Please have your child wear footwear that is safe to climb and run around in (no laces please). Shoes must always be worn during preschool, both inside and outside. If boots are uncomfortable for your child, please send a pair of shoes for your child to change into.

### **11.3 Information and Parent Involvement**

We want to share the preschool experience with our families and keep you informed of what's going on. Here are some ways you can be informed and involved:

- **Newsletters** - Newsletters will be sent out monthly via email with reminders, information about our activities for the month and anything else the teachers would like to share
- **Seesaw** - Seesaw is an app we use to share pictures and comments with our families of how we spend our time in the classroom.
- **Party Days** - Throughout the year, we will have a few parties where our preschool families can connect to one another, and we can share a few of our favorite songs. Children are required to be accompanied by an adult during a party (If you aren't available, you can ask another preschool family to participate with your child). Class schedules may change on our special party days.
- **Field Trips** - The class may take some field trips throughout the year. We appreciate parent volunteers on these excursions.
- **Sign-in Sheet** - Teachers may also write notes on the sign-in sheet to share with families.
- **Teacher Meetings** - The teachers are available to discuss any concerns or questions you may have about your child or the program. Generally, after the preschool program is a good time to discuss any issues, you would like us to be aware of.

### **11.4 Outings**

Throughout the year, teachers may take the children for walks through the Community Centre, or around Granville Island. Parents will be notified at the start of the day.

### **11.5 Party Days**

Party days are a great way to celebrate what we've been doing in preschool as well as connect with the teachers and other families. We ask families to come join us for the last part of class for songs, snack, and activities. Children are required to be accompanied by an adult during a party (If you aren't available, you can ask another preschool family to participate with your child. If this is not possible, please let a teacher know).

### **11.6 Snack**

Please send a labeled healthy snack and a water bottle for your child in a lunch box. Children and teachers eat snack together at the tables with conversations encouraged. Teachers will never force your child to eat. Please do not send nuts -we are a nut-free site.

Cut up fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers and muffins are all great snack choices. Please do not send chips, chocolate, candy or juice. Other limitations may be added depending on allergies within a class.

### **11.7 Labels**

Please label **everything** that comes to preschool! We always like to return items as soon as possible to their owners and labeling really helps this process.

### **12.0 Active Play Policy and Screen time (slightly adapted from the Director of Licensing)**

Active play is physical activity which includes moderate to vigorous bursts of high energy, raises children's heart rate and may make them 'huff and puff' such as running or jumping. Active play helps to promote healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement. Active play can help build strong bones and muscles, improve balance, coordination and assists with the development of gross motor and fine motor skills. Active play also helps to promote children's confidence, improves concentration and thinking and learning skills and provides opportunities to develop social skills and make friends.

Preschool will play outside for about 30 minutes every day except in extreme inclement weather. We do go outside in rain, snow, and the cold. Teachers encourage physical movement not only when playing outside but through active songs and activities in the classroom as well.

#### **Screen Time**

Children are not allowed to bring any electronics to school. We may do limited screen time on special days (e.g. Movie Day) or for educational purposes during the program. Children will not have access to tv, cellphones or tablets during the program at any time.

## **13 Health and Safety**

### **13.1 Health and Illness**

A child who is well can enjoy and participate in all areas of the program. Please do not bring a sick child to Preschool. The City of Vancouver Health Department provides guidelines in determining when a child is too ill to attend Preschool which are listed in the following section. If your child has a new or persistent cough, continually runny or coloured discharge from their nose or is fully unwell, please keep your child home.

If your child is on medication, please make the teachers aware in case of any side effects. If a child becomes ill during class time, one of the teachers will notify you so that arrangements can be made to have your child taken home. Should an emergency arise, you will be contacted immediately. It is essential parents or an emergency contact is easy to reach and available during the preschool class.

In an emergency your child will be taken to the hospital via an ambulance.

## **When is a child too ill to attend Preschool?** (from Vancouver Coastal Health)

Children in preschool are grouped together at the ages when they are most susceptible to infections. To determine what is a significant illness in a child is difficult for both parents and staff. There are three important issues in determining when a child is too ill to attend preschool:

1. The protection of other children from communicable disease.
2. The comfort and safety of the child who is ill.
3. The capacity of the preschool to look after an ill child.

With these issues in mind the following guidelines are given:

- \*1. Any child too ill to participate in normal activities of the preschool should be excluded.
- \*2. Children with upper respiratory infection but no fever need not be excluded for the protection of other children. Respiratory viruses are so common that it does not make sense to single out for exclusion those who exhibit minimal symptoms.
- \*3. Children on antibiotics who don't have a fever and are otherwise well need not be excluded.
- \*4. Children with suspected or known measles, mumps, rubella or chickenpox should be excluded until non-infectious. Children with generalized rash and fever are suspect of having measles and should be excluded pending diagnosis.
- \*5. In addition to the illnesses mentioned (4), there may be other less common communicable diseases, which would necessitate exclusion for a period of time. In the case of diagnosed communicable diseases the preschool should advise the Public Health Nurse at the local health Unit.
- \*6. Children with a chronic symptom such as a persistent cough or persistent fever warrant a medical evaluation. Once appropriate medical evaluation is obtained, they need not be excluded from the preschool unless they fall under the terms of 1), 4), or 5) above.
- \*7. Whenever a child attending a preschool develops new symptoms of illness (whether mentioned above or not), or has a worsening of symptoms, the parent should be notified to take the child home.
- \*8. Children with gastro-intestinal problems (e.g. vomiting, diarrhea) should be excluded from the preschool.

### **\*Reference:**

Trumpp C.E., Karasic R: Management of Communicable Disease in Daycare Centres. Pediatric Annuals 12:3, Pages 219-229      Revised 94/05/05      0274.COV

### **13.2 Immunizations**

You are strongly encouraged to ensure that all your child's immunizations are up to date before enrolling in preschool and that your child has had a recent medical exam. Licensing requires the Centre to keep a record of what immunizations your child has received.

### **13.3 Toileting**

We recognize that toileting children is an individual and personal experience. Each child is encouraged to communicate with a teacher when they need to go to the washroom.

Children should be fully toilet trained by the time they enter the program.

However, please let us know if your child needs reminders or additional help. Children who are still working on toilet training must wear a pull-up and have a caregiver nearby in case they need to be changed. Because a proper changing area is not available in our classroom, licensing regulations do not allow teachers to change pull-ups and diapers.

### **13.4 First Aid and Medical Emergencies**

Our Preschool teachers have current first-aid certification, as required by Vancouver Coastal Health.

If your child is injured or becomes ill while at the program, a teacher will quickly assess the situation to decide what action/attention is required. If the child requires medical attention by a physician or health care professional, as per the signed permission on the "Emergency Consent Card," a teacher will:

- Contact the parent/guardian (and the emergency contact/s if a parent/guardian cannot be reached)
- Call and request an ambulance if the child has serious injuries.
- If required, a teacher will accompany the child to the hospital until a parent arrives.

### **13.5 Administering Medication**

If you would like the childcare staff to administer Prescription Medication to your child, we require the medication to be prescribed by a physician. We also require the medication to be provided in the original container/bottle, clearly showing the child's name, doctor's name and the type of medication. We also require a "Consent to Administer Medication" form (available from a staff person) to be completed with instructions on administering the medication.

### **13.6 Fire Drills**

The Preschool has a written procedure for fire drills, approved by the Vancouver Fire Department. Each staff member is familiar with this procedure, and the preschool is required to practice a fire drill monthly.

### **13.7 Emergency Evacuation**

Emergency evacuation drills are reviewed and practiced at least annually. In the event of an emergency that makes the centre's premises unsafe, the children will be evacuated from the building. Arrangements have been made with the Granville Island Hotel to stay there until the children can be picked up by their parents or guardians. Preschool staff will contact the families in the event of an emergency to inform you of the pickup location.

### **13.8 72 Hour Plan**

In the event of a major earthquake, False Creek Community Centre becomes an Emergency Reception Centre. We have food, water, and supplies stored to care for the children for at least 72 hours. If False Creek Community Centre and Granville Island Hotel are deemed unsafe, the Emergency Services team will evacuate the children to the next closest Emergency Reception Centre. During this time, the staff will remain with the children. The Emergency Services team will take responsibility and register the children and staff as well as attempt to contact and connect families with their children.

#### **Emergency Shelter:**

Granville Island Hotel  
**1253 Johnston St**  
Granville Island 604-683-7373

## **14. Supervision & Behaviour Guidance**

### **Supervision**

Children attending Swamp Willow Preschool are always supervised by qualified Preschool teachers. The program maintains a ratio of 1 staff member to 10 children, with a maximum of 20 children per preschool class.

### **Behaviour Guidance**

The goal of using guidance techniques in early childhood programs is to help children develop safe and appropriate ways of expressing themselves, interacting with others and interacting with the environment. One of our goals is to help children develop tools to handle conflict in a positive, confident manner.

In the process of setting and enforcing limits, our teachers assist the children in recognizing their emotions and expressing feelings in a safe, appropriate way. Children develop skills on how to manage in a group setting, while teachers ensure individual rights and self-expression are also valued. There will be different expectations and routines in

our preschool setting that may differ from those in a child's home.

We understand that being in a group environment may be a new experience for many children, and there may be an adjustment period. When safety is an issue, the teachers act immediately or intervene in situations that children cannot manage appropriately on their own.

**Guidance and discipline techniques** that will be used with the children include:

- modelling acceptable behaviour;
- recognizing each child's individual needs;
- recognizing the children's efforts;
- anticipating and eliminating potential problems;
- redirection;
- planning the daily schedule in such a manner as to allow the children a successful mixture of choice and structure;
- use of natural and logical consequences;
- clear and positive phrasing of requirements & limits;
- providing consistency and following through;
- offering a choice, when possible;

In an atmosphere of support, acceptance, and warmth, we give children the security of guidance. The rules are kept simple and consistent and are determined by the need for safety, the rights of others (peers & teachers) and respect for their classroom environment.

## **15. Behaviour Management Procedure**

When a child's behaviour is inappropriate or interferes with the safety or rights of others, the following procedure will be practiced.

1. A **verbal reminder** to the child which includes a discussion as to why the behaviour is undesirable as well as positive alternatives. **Written documentation** of the incident will be in the staff communication book as well as mentioned at pick up to the parents or guardians.
2. If the behaviour continues, contact will be made with the parents or guardians to establish a **support network** for the child in his/her efforts to change behaviour.
3. **Outside resources** may be sought with parental consent (i.e. Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Centre for Ability).
4. Every effort will be made by the teachers to meet the individual child's needs. If the teachers determine that the behaviour is consistently and severely disruptive, and that the welfare of other children is seriously jeopardized, then a meeting will be held. The child's readiness for the program may be assessed.

## **16. Inclusion Policy**

We believe in the value of inclusion. We respect and are enriched by the diversity in our community, including culture, language, religion, socio-economic status, and ability. All children can participate in the centre's typical activities. There should be no barriers to any child's enrollment in the programs offered. The hours and days of attendance need to be available to all families and their children, regardless of their support needs.

We believe that an inclusive program that welcomes all children and families benefits everyone. Some of these benefits are awareness and respect for differences, greater acceptance, and superior social outcomes. We believe that children with extra support needs should be included and respected in Early Childhood programs with their peers.

We have supported and will continue to support children who require support with language and other developmental delays, emotional, behavioural, and physical challenges, and exceptional health care needs.

### Procedures for Successful Inclusion

Families and staff will work together to find the best system for a child to enter the program. Programs will ensure that staff have the required training and equipment to meet the child's needs.

### Inclusive Philosophy is...

- Believing every child belongs
- Having a "child is a child first" attitude
- Involving the family every step of the way
- Being accepting of diversity
- Making changes for the program, not the child
- Promoting self-reliance
- Being empathetic
- Working in partnership with all who are or could be involved with the child or his care

### Inclusive Philosophy is not...

- Excluding children due to disabilities
- Categorising a child by their disability
- Thinking we are the experts and directing families
- Making judgments about a child's abilities
- Changing the program to fit one child or changing the child to fit the program
- Promoting dependence
- Being sympathetic
- Being distrustful of outside involvement
- Isolating one child when all children could benefit

## Care Plans

We develop Individual Care Plans as a team, including parents and relevant professionals such as Supported Child Development Consultants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Psychologists, to meet each child's specific needs for growth and development.

A written Individual Care Plan outlines a child's strengths, needs, specific goals, timelines, and the support needed to implement those goals.

## Environmental and Learning Considerations

Inclusive environments consider the unique needs of all children in the setup of the physical environment to provide full and meaningful participation. When a child with extra support needs is enrolled in the program, the family and staff must assess the classroom environment in relation to the child's needs. Safety, access, equipment, and storage needs must be considered to determine whether any modifications or adaptations are needed to accommodate the child.

### Environmental

- All classroom and learning areas are accessible to all children
- Efforts to meet sensory needs are met with softened noise and lights, quiet spaces, and active spaces
- All play areas inside and out are accessible to all children
- Wheelchair access is available and adequately maintained
- Wide pathways between furniture to allow for a wheelchair and walker
- Adaptations are made to equipment and furniture to reduce or remove barriers for children, such as adjusting table heights
- Toileting modifications

### Learning Experiences

- Accessible communication is visible (e.g. American Sign Language visuals, picture schedules, emotion/feeling images)
- Learning materials include people of diverse abilities and diverse cultures
- Books in space reflect all children's interests, strengths, and passions
- Learning materials are visible and at the children's level so that every child can access items independently
- Adjustments are made to routines and transitions to make learning experiences positive for all children

### Social Learning Materials

- Accessories and equipment span the interests, and skill sets of all children in the space
- Play accessories represent diverse cultures
- Accessories and equipment encourage solitary, parallel, and cooperative play and promote social interactions among children of all abilities
- Multisensory learning materials are included in the centre to encourage gross and fine motor skills, and to meet sensory needs (e.g., sensory putty, finger paints, textured objects, fidget toys, clay, small and heavy blocks, and sand)

### Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is free from words and tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped, or discriminatory views of people. It ensures that people feel included and accepted by others. The use of inclusive language is key to inclusive childcare.

Person-first language puts the person first. For example, in identifying children who are living with various conditions or disabilities, you would say “children with disabilities” - this focuses on the person first, not on their traits.

### Reference Materials

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/running-a-daycare-or-preschool/inclusive-child-care-toolkit/inclusive-childcare-toolkit.pdf>

## **17. Communication & Confidentiality Policy**

### Communication Policy

Open communication plays an integral part in developing and maintaining a strong partnership between families and staff. It is important that there is an exchange of information between the families and staff. This information can improve the staff's ability to care for the children. Our communication tools are designed to ensure that all staff and families are fully aware of what is happening in any child's care.

#### **Procedure**

We will ensure Parents/Guardians are Kept Informed and Involved by:

- Providing regular communication with the Parent/Guardian concerning the child's ongoing development and well-being in the program, including any changes staff may notice in a child's behaviour.
- Working with the Parent/Guardian and child to find the best solution should there be a problem.
- Parents/Guardians are welcome to drop in and observe the program at any time.
- Telephone/email communication is encouraged
- Program activities: Parents/guardians can expect information regarding the program, activities, and upcoming events.
- Parents will be asked to make themselves familiar with the Parent Manual, which states the centre's policies and procedures, and general operations

Staff may use the following tools for communication:

- Child Care Parent Manual - confirm families have reviewed the manual and signed their parent agreement.
- Registration meeting with Program Supervisor
- Program information sent home with children
- Newsletters - each month, a newsletter will be sent home about themes, reminders, policy information, monthly updates, special activities, and events.
- Bulletin Boards - staff licenses to practice and first aid certificates should always be posted. Also, post copies of the newsletter, announcements, the calendar of activities, snack information, program information, and the emergency evacuation plan.
- Apps - apps like See Saw will be used for correspondence and to document daily activities and learning.
- Conversations - If a parent/guardian or staff member needs to discuss a particular issue in private, or if the conversation would distract the teacher from focusing on the children in their care, they will arrange a phone call.

## Parent Responsibilities for Communication:

Up-to-date records are essential to the well-being of children in our care. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to communicate regularly with the program staff. Staff must be informed of any event or change of routine at home that may affect a child's behaviour. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to promptly advise the Program of any changes in:

- Address, telephone number,
- Alternate pick-up person, emergency contacts
- Custody arrangement
- Change in medical information
- Changes of a routine at home
- Any other vital information

## Confidentiality Policy

Information considered private and personal is protected and disclosed only on a need-to-know basis. All staff have a legal obligation to adhere to privacy laws and an ethical obligation to respect the personal and private information the program collects in the course of business regarding staff, children, and families.

## Procedure

- All written information that is confidential will be stored in a secure place.
- Staff will not share information about a child with other children or families.
- Staff hold confidential conversations in a private location where the conversation content cannot be overheard.
- No information will be released about a child or family without the written consent from the enrolling parent/ legal guardian (Exceptions include situations related to child protection or when the information is subpoenaed by the court). Once written consent is obtained, we are obligated to release the information no later than 30 days after the request date.
- If information is requested that meets these guidelines but shows information about another person, the unnecessary information will be redacted. (Attendance for one child is requested; redact the other children's names.)
- Staff are not allowed to use client (families) personal information for personal use
- Staff will not use, post, or display client, services, or Centre information on any social media

## **18. Feedback, Suggestions & Concerns**

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to talk to the staff after if there is anything you would like to discuss. If an area of concern arises, please bring it to the staff's attention. It is important to us to hear your concerns, and we will make every effort to work through them collaboratively. For any additional communication, questions, or concerns, please contact the Childcare Manager.

Swamp Willow Preschool Supervisor

Maya – [\*\*maya.sadeghi@vancouver.ca\*\*](mailto:maya.sadeghi@vancouver.ca)

Preschool Phone ~ 604-257-6997

Childcare Manager ~ 604-257-6998

Tabby Marin - [\*\*tabatha.marin@vancouver.ca\*\*](mailto:tabatha.marin@vancouver.ca)