

**Stirling Montessori Academy
Parent Handbook
September 2023**

Stirling Montessori Academy is a non-denominational organization. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promotion, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programmes and activities of its students.

Note to Parents

The Parent Handbook is designed to be a convenient and reference for parents and/or legal guardians of all Stirling Montessori students. If you have any suggestions regarding content please send them in writing to the school via e-mail or contact the Directors directly.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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HISTORY

Stirling Montessori Academy was established in 2013. We strive to be a positive, loving and nurturing environment for your child.

PHILOSOPHY

At Stirling Montessori Academy we are dedicated to providing a nurturing and inspiring learning environment for each of our students. Our goal is to deliver a rich program entrenched in Montessori principles which foster independence, confidence and a love for learning.

MISSION

At Stirling Montessori Academy our goal is to deliver an authentic Montessori experience. Children are nurtured to become confident, compassionate, independent, self-motivated, life-long learners.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The main objective of Stirling Montessori Academy is to follow the Montessori pedagogy. We provide a planned, stimulating environment to help children develop the foundational habits, attitudes, skills, and ideas essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

Our goals include:

1. Developing a positive attitude toward school, learning and life.
2. Developing self- esteem, self-discipline and a sense of order.
3. Building concentration skills for lifelong learning.
4. Encouraging curiosity, initiative and persistence.
5. Developing sensory-motor skills to assist with discrimination and judgment.
6. Allowing the individual to develop his or her true self.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

At Stirling Montessori Academy lead teachers are MACTE certified or RECE with Montessori Training. The assistants are trained Montessori teachers or have their RECE diploma or Montessori Assistant Training and are under the guidance of the lead teacher.

COMMUNICATION & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are many opportunities available to interact with teachers, other parents, and the Directors while contributing to your child's educational experience. Good communication with the teacher is an important element. We keep you informed in a timely way about activities and school plans. Communication includes the following:

- **Parent Letters:** These letters are sent via e-mail to the parents to inform them of current activities at the school, including any notices.
- **Monthly Newsletter:** This newsletter is sent to the parents via e-mail and will contain current information regarding the school and Montessori Education in general.
- **Parent Education Evenings:** Parent evenings will be held throughout the year. Teachers will speak about child development, Montessori materials and methodology, and the philosophy of the program.
- **Parent Interviews:** Parent Interviews will be held twice a year. Interviews help teachers and parents understand the progress of each child and provides an opportunity to discuss the child's social, physical, emotional and cognitive development. Both parents are encouraged to attend.
- **Observations:** Parents are welcome to book a time to observe the classroom from the viewing window outside the classroom. This allows the parent to see how their child engages in the classroom and how the classroom community functions. We discourage parents from 'in-class' observations as this proves too disruptive to the Montessori work cycle.
- **School Calendar:** A school calendar for the year is distributed each summer. Statutory holidays, professional development days, parent interviews, school start and end dates and other important dates are marked on this calendar.

- **Website:** www.stirlingmontessori.com Our website offers information about Montessori, the school and our philosophy. It also holds current information and announcements.

CONFIDENTIALITY & STUDENT RECORDS

The school maintains a file for each student currently and previously enrolled at the school. The file contains required admission and enrollment forms, attendance records, progress reports, health information forms, and any other information regarding the student. Student records and school-parent communications are confidential. Student information is held in confidence, and will not be disclosed without the written consent of a parent or guardian, with the exception of information regarding a health or safety emergency.

Access to Student Records

Parents/legal guardians have the right to inspect the records of their children. Parents/legal guardians may schedule an appointment with the Directors to review the students' files in the school office and may obtain a copy of the information. Parents may request that their child's records be amended to correct inaccuracies or provide clarification.

Release of Student Records

Student records will be released to another educational institution when we receive a request from that institution. We ask that all financial obligations to the school be fulfilled. Records will not be released if these conditions are not met.

CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES/SPECIAL NEEDS

If we observe any students with special needs we will attend to them by communicating with the parents and discussing a plan. We are trained to individualize and adjust instruction for children in a variety of ways. This training allows us to successfully accommodate children with a variety of learning differences and needs. If a child's special needs will require too many adjustments to our program or detract too much from meeting the needs of the other children, we will make recommendations of other more suitable environments where the child's needs can be fully met.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & CONCERNS (See Parent Concern Policy)

Parents are encouraged to express questions, comments and concerns as they arise. We welcome open communication as we partner with you in your child's education and development. It is important that you inform us of any major change at home. Please advise us of changes such as the birth of a sibling, a death in the family, divorce or separation, the absence of a parent, your child's inability to sleep for several consecutive nights, the death of a pet, new medication or change in medication dosage, or any other matters which might affect the child's sense of well-being.

PROGRAM GOALS

Goals for our students include developing self-confidence, independence, responsibility for themselves and their learning and an increased curiosity about the world.

Skills young students start acquiring include:

- Keeping track of their belongings - each child has a place to store possessions.
- Understanding order - each child learns to put things away in the proper place, to take turns, and to follow the intrinsic order of the materials.
- Doing things independently - zipping, buttoning, etc. - children develop an interest in these skills when they see older children doing them.
- Sharing an adult - the children realize that they cannot have the undivided attention of an adult.
- Developing self-control - the children learn to observe the limits of the environment and the community they belong to.
- Acquiring language skills - children's new feelings and experiences will broaden their range of expression.

Continuity

Children generally stay in the Casa class for three successive years, allowing teachers, parents, and children develop more intimate relationships.

Social Environment

An authentic Montessori classroom is a friendly place where children talk to one another freely and group and regroup at will.

Repetition

Presentations introduce the children to materials, show how to handle them, and what to do with them. The key to coordination and developments comes as the child repeats the work with the materials. Through repetition the children acquire a deeper understanding of the concept or skill.

CASA CURRICULUM (2 ½-6 years)

The Casa curriculum is an individual program which helps each child develop physically, emotionally, and cognitively at their own pace. The curriculum helps each child gain self-esteem, independence, physical development, and academic achievement.

Practical Life

Children learn how to function successfully in their environment. They acquire independence, coordination, balance and muscular control. Children learn work habits, concentration, perseverance, and respect for others.

Sensorial

The main objective of the sensorial area is to refine and develop the five senses. The children classify, contrast and compare colour, shape, smell, touch, temperature, weight and textures.

Language

The children write before they read. All pre-reading and pre-writing skills are emphasized in a sensorial manner. Vocabulary, drama, and creative writing are an integral part of our curriculum.

Mathematics

The primary purpose is to lay a sound number and geometry foundation. The children are introduced to numbers, quantities and the decimal system. They explore the basic operations of addition, multiplication, subtraction, place value, fractions and measurement.

Culture

The children study living and nonliving things, plants and their parts, animals and their parts, life cycles, metamorphosis and the physical sciences. Seasons and temperature are also part of this study. Geography, history, calendar and time enrich this section of the curriculum. In Art the children are introduced to all forms of art expression including studies of pictures by famous artists.

Music

The children are exposed to different types of music and sing each day at circle time. Each class participates in a Music & Movement circle with each week.

French

The class is visited once or twice a week by the French Teacher who will work with small groups of children teaching French vocabulary and songs with the aid of materials.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

A child's progress is monitored and assessed in a number of ways:

Self-Correcting Materials: The self-correcting nature of most of the Montessori materials aids the children to self-monitor their progress.

Peer Teaching: Children who have mastered an activity are encouraged to support the work of younger classmates.

Teacher Assessment: Teachers observe student's progress and keep daily anecdotal records. Weekly and monthly lesson plans record presentations given, practiced and mastered.

Parent Interviews: Parent interviews are held in both the first and third terms. Interviews will be held between 4-7 pm on an evening after school. If you are unable to attend your scheduled time please contact your child's teacher to re-schedule.

Reports: Teachers prepare a year-end report outlining the Casa child's progress.

CASA PROGRAM HOURS/SCHEDULE

- Before Care Program (indoors) 7:30am – 8:45am
- Morning Casa Program 8:45am – 11:30am
- Lunch/Recess 11:30am – 1:00pm
- Afternoon Work Cycle/Nap Time 1:00pm – 3:30pm
- Outdoor Dismissal 3:30pm – 3:45pm
- After School Program 3:45pm – 5:30pm

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Admission Policy

Stirling Montessori Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promotion, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programs and activities of its students. We engage in conversations with prospective families about the goal of what the parent wants, what we can provide and if our program would be a fit for the child.

The following requirements must be met prior to registration:

- Prospective Casa students must be at least 2½ years old (30 months) by September 1st, fully toilet-trained, and able to leave their parents.
- All forms and contracts relating to registration must be completed and signed in full before the student begins class.
- A deposit is required to reserve the student's placement.

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC)

Stirling Montessori Academy has opted-out of the CWELCC program.

Priority of Placement

Re-enrolling students will be offered the opportunity to make first choice in program and enrollment. After that priority will go to siblings, alumni and students on the waiting-list. Students are added to the wait list in a chronological order, the information is kept confidential, however parents can request the status of their child on the wait list. There is no charge to be added to the wait list which is managed in a fair and transparent manner. The Directors reserve the right to adjust enrollment placement of children at any time.

Classroom Placement

The final decision for classroom placement is made in the best interest of the child by the Directors. Parents who have information relating to this decision are asked to communicate a request in writing. Changes in classroom placement will only be made if the well-being of the child is seriously affected.

Casa children may be placed in a classroom of 16-21 children with Montessori Lead teachers and/or assistants.

Tuition

- For parents/guardians of prospective new students, the Fee Schedule is included in the Enrollment Package which is distributed on an as requested basis. Base fees include the annual tuition amount and Extended Care Program fees. Non-base fees include Late-Pick up Fees, NSF charge, Field Trip fees.
- For parents of existing students, the Fee Schedule is included each year in the Re-Enrollment Package which is distributed at the beginning of March of each year.
- The tuition is based on an annual rate. For your convenience, the annual tuition can be paid over ten months from September to June.
- The school provides discounted tuition fees of 15% for a sibling enrolled.
- Fees are payable by Pre-Authorized Debit to Stirling Montessori Academy Inc.
- Enrollment is accepted only after the school's receipt of a completed Enrollment Form and deposit.

- Payment in full or by Pre Authorized Debit is made at that time.
- It is uncomfortable and costly for us to have to remind parents to pay their tuition on time, and so to avoid continual late payments, there will be a charge of 1% per month (12% nominally per annum) on late payments and a charge of \$25.00 for NSF payments.

Enrollment Deadlines

- Enrollment forms for parents/guardians of prospective new students are included in the Enrollment Package which is distributed on an as requested basis.
- Re-enrollment forms/contracts for continuing students are included in the Re-Enrollment Package which is distributed in January of each year.
- In general, the application process is completed within 10 days of application. Upon acceptance into the school, a tuition deposit or the full tuition fee is due. In the case of re-enrolment the deposit or fee is due no later than the deadline date. Payment is necessary to hold the space for the student. In all cases, it is to the families' benefit to apply or reenrol in a timely manner.

Withdrawal / Dismissal from the School

There is no refund or reduction of fees in case of withdrawal, dismissal, absence, cancellation or non-attendance.

The following constitutes grounds for your child's dismissal from our program:

- Inability to function in the Montessori classroom - occasionally a child needs more help than we are equipped to give. Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a problem exists.
- If we have raised concerns regarding the child's ability to thrive in our environment and the parent(s) are not willing to partner with us to assist in meeting the child's needs.
- Overdue tuition - the school aims to keep our tuition costs down and to provide the best possible program for your child. If you are having financial difficulty please contact us and we will help you work out a satisfactory solution. If parents are one month behind on their payments schedule and have not made special arrangements with us, their child will not be permitted to attend class.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival

Parents are requested to drop their children off at the designated drop-off (playground or inside) where they will be greeted by a member of staff. Drop off is from 8:45 – 9:00am – punctuality is encouraged as children have an easier transition to the school day if they are preparing along with other students.

Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from the designated pick-up (playground or inside) from 3:30 – 3:45pm. After that time students will join the After School Program.

Pick Up Authorization

Children will be released to authorized persons as indicated on the Enrollment Information. If you know in advance that a person not indicated on the card will be picking your child up, you must send a note or e-mail of authorization. In an emergency, a telephone call will be sufficient. A child will not be released unless we have received notification of the change. We take these precautions to ensure the safety of your child.

Parking

The drop-off area is provided for cars at the side parking lot of the building. PLEASE do not leave the engine running in your vehicles. If you are waiting outside for your children PLEASE turn off the ignition.

Early Pick-Up

Please notify the school office at the beginning of day about any plans to pick up your child from school early.

Late Pick-Up

Children who are not picked up at their scheduled time will be placed in the After School Program and be charged accordingly. Please do your best to contact the school if you are going to be late.

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Extended Day Program was created to provide families enrolled in the school with convenient childcare consistent with the Montessori philosophy. Before School Care is available from 7:30 – 8:45 a.m. After School Care

Serious Accident or Medical Emergency

In the case of a serious accident or medical emergency, the parent or person responsible for the child will be notified. The physician listed on your child's Enrollment Form will be phoned to ask for their recommendation. For serious injuries the Director or Supervisor will call 911. If the child needs to go to the hospital and the parents cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the Milton Hospital. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and take their file folder with them in case emergency care is needed. It is important that you keep all contact information up to date.

FIRE

In the event of a fire, students will follow the teacher out of the classroom to the playground. The Director will check all rooms, then follow the classes out and check attendance accounting for every person. If we are unable to return to the school building, staff will escort the students to the designated place of shelter where parents will be contacted. Monthly Fire Drills will be practiced with students and staff in accordance with required legislation.

Designated Place of Shelter: 12 Martin Street, Milton, Ontario

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Freedom and Discipline in the Classroom

The two basic rules at school are that children may not hurt or abuse people or equipment and children may not disturb or interfere with another's work.

Discipline Policy

Children are disciplined in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their actions and their ages in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety; respect the rights of others and maintain equipment. Methods of discipline are discussed at staff meetings, and consistent disciplinary measures are agreed upon. The school does not permit spanking or other forms of corporal punishment.

Positive Approaches to Behaviour Management

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal of a Montessori program. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose work that they are capable of doing and are free to use it as long as they wish without interference from others. In addition, the mixed age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behaviour of the older children. Children are encouraged to handle their disagreements by talking to each other first and by attempting to resolve conflicts independently before seeking help from an adult. Skills needed for conflict resolution and problem solving are learned as an important part of the Montessori lessons presented and practiced in the classroom. Parents are contacted in the case of a repeated misbehaviour or a single serious incident.

Outdoor and Playground Rules

Playground rules are explained to the children during the first weeks of school. They include:

- No rough physical contact.
- Children are encouraged to work things out themselves.
- Be respectful of the outdoors and equipment.

Prohibited Practices

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or

(f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

O. Reg. 126/16, s. 34 *

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Parents are welcome to book a time to observe the class once students have settled at the beginning of the year. Observations can be booked through the school office. During the observation you may notice the following aspects of the Montessori Classroom:

- children's interactions with the total classroom: people, materials, etc.
- how they initiate activities (independence)
- activities initiated by the child and by the teacher
- the ability to concentrate and to be absorbed, how it varies from child to child
- small group and/or individual activities
- interaction between the children - teamwork, courtesy, etc.

FIRST DAY (What to bring)

- Children are to bring a labelled zip locked bag with a pair of extra clothes. The extra clothes do not have to be uniform. Please include socks, underwear, shirt and pants. When items are used please be sure to send in another spare set.
- A pair of black leather/running indoor shoes are required as well as a pair of outdoor shoes. Running shoes are recommended for outside play. Flip flops and croc like shoes are not permitted at school.
- Please send your child ready for outdoor play (hats, sunscreen, snow pants, boots, hats and mittens). Children will be going outside everyday (weather permitting) please ensure that they are adequately dressed.

UNIFORMS

The school office will have a supply of school uniforms. Uniforms are purchased directly through Uniform Basics at https://uniformbasics.com/brands/stirling_montessori_academy/

Labelling Clothing

Please label child's uniform and additional clothing as many of the children have items that are the same style and/or size; the school cannot assume responsibility for lost clothing or personal articles.

Outside Play and Clothing

Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for daily outdoor play. Snow pants, gloves and hats are necessary all winter.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

School Closing Policy

We will use our discretion whether to open or close the school, to open late or to open on time due to inclement weather. Parents will receive an email to advise of closings.

Professional Development Days

PD days will be announced at the beginning of each school year in order for parents to have adequate notice in accommodating for these closings. Stirling Montessori Academy supports staff members in achieving their annual professional development goals by sending them to workshops, conferences and courses which will enrich their teaching skills.

Holidays Observed

The school will be closed on the following statutory holidays during the school year:

- New Years Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday

- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day

Other Vacation Dates

The school will also be closed for Winter Break, March Break and Summer Holidays. The scheduled dates for these vacations are published in the school calendar.

CELEBRATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

Holidays

Stirling Montessori Academy is non-discriminatory and non-sectarian. Holidays are times for sharing of family heritage and traditions. We ask that you note the following:

- For Halloween children are asked not to wear costumes to school as they often become uncomfortable throughout the day. Instead children are welcome to come dressed in black and orange. Please to not send treats on this day.
- For Valentine's Day children are welcome to come dressed in red, pink or white. Children are able to bring Valentine's cards for each member (addressed to 'My Friend') of the class if they choose. Please do not send in any treats on this day.

Birthdays

If you are planning a home birthday party for your child invitations will be distributed in class only if each child is invited, as it is a sensitive issue at this age. Otherwise please speak to the teacher about how to contact the parents/children you would like to invite.

To help the children understand the passage of time, we have a special activity where we observe each child's birthday by singing a song where each year is celebrated.

As a birthday tradition we welcome book donations to our school library from the birthday child. Your child's favourite book or a theme book would be very much appreciated in growing our school library.

FOOD & SNACK GUIDELINES

Daily Snack

The children are provided a small, nutritious snack during the work period in both the morning and the afternoon sessions.

Dietary Needs and Food Allergies

Children's special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the kitchen and classrooms. Stirling Montessori Academy is a **NUT RESTRICTED** school. Although it is not possible for us to guarantee a nut free school, our goal is to create the safest environment possible for our anaphylactic students. Therefore, as some of our students have a life-threatening allergic reaction to nuts, all peanut butter, peanuts, tree nuts, nut products, or anything that could have traces of nut products are banned from the school.

LUNCH GUIDELINES

We offer a healthy hot lunch program for all Casa students, the program is mandatory for students enrolled in the full-day program. Menus will be posted on the bulletin board in the school foyer, any changes will be noted. Please send a water bottle to school clearly marked with your child's name.

ALLERGIES – SUBSTITUTE FOOD ITEMS

In the event that a substitute food item needs to be sent in with the child (i.e. substitute milk, substitute pizza) a Food Restriction form must be completed by the parent listing all ingredients in the substitute item; item must be labelled with child's name and date it was provided to the school.

ANAPHYLAXIS – SNACKS/MEALS SENT IN FROM HOME

In the event that a child needs to have daily snacks and/or hot lunch sent in from home to meet the required food allergies that cannot be met by the caterer, the process would include:

- a discussion between the Supervisor and parents/guardians;
- a list of the child's dietary needs/allergies written and placed in the child's file;
- completion of the above mentioned **Food Restriction Form** to accompany all food items sent in from home;

- parents are not permitted to send in any specific anaphylactic restricted food of other children in the program; and
- food items from home are to be labelled with the child's name and the date they were sent in.

MISCELLANEOUS

Lost and Found

Misplaced items will be placed in the lost and found box in the school office. Unclaimed items will be given to charity. We will attempt to return items if they are marked with your child's name.

Mysterious Objects

Many of our classroom materials consist of small attractive objects that are appealing to children. If you find any "mysterious objects" in your child's possession, please return them to school.

Toys vs. Things to Share

Toys are not permitted at school or during the Before and After School Programs as we have organized activities and items for free play during those hours.

We welcome a child's "special things," items of interest to be shared with the class, especially if such items relate to the current theme. If you have any questions regarding toys vs. things to share, please check with the teacher before sending anything to school.

Field Trips/Visitors

During the course of the school year we will have occasional field trips to enrich the children's learning experience. All trips will be announced in advance with regards to the destination and time. All families must sign a field trip waiver form. Field trips will be in the local area. We will also have regular visitors to the school such as the Fire Department, Library, to enrich the students' learning experience.

Volunteers & Students

At times we may have a volunteer or Montessori/RECE student in the school. Both Volunteers and Students are not permitted to be alone with any child, they are supervised by an employee at all times.

Rest Time

Children who are enrolled in the Full Day Casa program will have a rest time after lunch where they may rest quietly or nap – cots are provided.

Parent Library

The school office houses a collection of books and magazines of interest to parents. Topics include parenting, discipline, and Montessori philosophy. Parents are welcome to borrow these materials at any time.

Class Photos

Photographs of each student and class are taken each year. Parents will be notified in advance of the date and time. All parents are asked to sign a release form that gives the school permission to publish photographs of their child in articles, ads, or the web page. The child's name will not be used.

Lower Elementary Montessori Curriculum

Practical Life

Practical Life continues at the Elementary Level. Elements of our Practical Life:

- Care of the classroom. The children take an active role in cleaning the classroom each day.
- Grace & Courtesy: greeting, interrupting, waiting for a turn, apologizing, thanking, giving and receiving compliments, respecting space of others.
- Emphasis will be place on: respect, compassion, friendships, generosity and kindness.

Language

Language is an important part of the Montessori curriculum. As a child first learns a phonetic sound, they begin to associate that sound to everything they see and hear. By the time a child reaches the elementary level, reading has turned into understanding every word in a sentence and their grammatical role. The goal is to ensure that children understand the functions of both written and oral language.

Mathematics

When learning math within the Montessori classroom, the aim is to begin with tangible materials that the child can see and touch and slowly move to a more abstract way of learning.

Culture Studies

The purpose of Culture studies is to develop a view of the world as a whole and to see the interdependence of all life (Geography, History, Botany, and Zoology). This area of the classroom provides insight to a child to help understand the "bigger picture".

History

The study of History begins with an introduction to the concepts of time and culture. Once the children have an awareness of clocks and calendars, they begin to look at History from the beginning of time when the universe was created.

Geography

Geography is the study of our home, the Earth. Students will not only develop an appreciation for the people of the world – their similarities and differences – but will see the inter-relatedness of all things, particularly themselves and the environment.

Botany and Zoology

From understanding why water is important to a plant, to learning about the vital functions of a bird, children truly are fascinated every step of the way about life around them.

Botany is the study of plants; the knowledge of plants, the needs of plants, the leaf, the roots, the stem, the flower, the seed, the fruit and the classification of plants.

Zoology is the study of animals. Children are fascinated by animals – their growth, their needs and their habitats.

Music

The children will be introduced to a variety of components such as; pitch, beat, creative expression and rhythm patterns.

Physical Education

With organized activities to build confidence and athleticism, children will participate in weekly physical education. Emphasis on cooperative games, teambuilding, sportsmanship, and individual challenges will build the foundation for the program. The study of nutrition and the human body are included in our curriculum. Physical Education will be offered once a week in the main floor auditorium.

French

The approach used for the French program combines the use of gestures, songs / music, storytelling, art and error analysis.

MONTESSORI TERMINOLOGY

The Absorbent Mind: A mind able to absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly. Montessori said the child from birth to six years has an "absorbent mind."

Children's House: The English name for Montessori's Casa de Bambini (Italian). A place for children from 3-6 years to live and grow.

Concrete to Abstract: A progression both logical and developmentally appropriate. The child is introduced first to a concrete material that embodies an abstract idea such as size or colour. Given hands-on experience, the child's mind grasps the idea inherent in the material and forms an abstraction.

Control of Error: A way of providing instant feedback. Every Montessori activity provides the child with some way of assessing his own progress. This puts the control in the hands of the learner and protects the young child's self-esteem and self-motivation.

Practical Life Exercises: One of the four areas of the Montessori prepared environment. The exercises of practical life resemble the simple work of life in the home: sweeping, dusting, washing dishes, etc. These purposeful activities help the child adapt to his new community, learn self-control and begin to see himself as a contributing party of the social unit. His intellect grows as he works with his hands; his personality becomes integrated as body and mind function as a unit.

False Fatigue: A phenomenon observed in Children's Houses around the world – often at approximately 10:00 a.m. The children seem to lose interest in work, their behaviour becomes disorderly and the noise level rises. It may appear as if the children are tired. However, if the directress understands this is simply false fatigue, they will return to work on their own and their work will be at an even higher level than before.

Grace and Courtesy: An aspect of Practical Life - lessons which demonstrate positive social behaviour help the young child adapt to life in a group and arm her with knowledge of socially acceptable behaviour, practical information, useful both in and out of school.

Human Tendencies: Central to Montessori philosophy is that human beings exhibit a predisposition towards exploration, orientation, order, abstraction, work, self-perfection, communication and a spiritual life.

Isolation of a Difficulty: Before giving a presentation, the Montessori teacher analyzes the activity she wants to show the child. Procedures or movements that might prove challenging are isolated and taught to the child separately. For example, folding cloths are shown before table washing, an activity requiring folding. A task should neither be so hard that it is overwhelming, nor so easy that it is boring.

Indirect Preparation: The way nature has of preparing the intelligence. In every action, there is a conscious interest. Through this interest, the mind is being prepared for something in the future. For example, a young child will enjoy the putting together of various triangular shapes, totally unaware that because of this work his mind will later be more accepting of geometry.

Learning Explosions: Human development is often not slow and steady; acquisitions seem to arrive suddenly, almost overnight, and with explosive impact. These learning explosions are the sudden outward manifestation of a long process of internal growth. For example, the explosion of spoken language around two years of age is the result of many months of inner preparation and mental development

Stirling Montessori Academy Ministry Program Statement **(Regulation 46)**

Stirling Montessori's interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)?*" It is important to note that Montessori pedagogy often describes children's activities as 'work' where HDLH describes children's activity as 'play' but the activities, as experienced by a child, are one in the same.

This Ministry program statement will be reviewed with childcare staff and volunteers annually or whenever an amendment is made.

Stirling Montessori holds the view that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

This Ministry statement describes our goals for children at Stirling Montessori and the approaches that we implement to meet those goals.

We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15.

We promote the health, safety, and well being of the children by:

1. Encouraging nutritious eating at snack and mealtimes.
2. Teaching the importance of personal hygiene, e.g. when hand washing, blowing nose, sneezing.
3. Enforcing public health guidelines around quarantines for various illnesses.
4. Each child is signed in and out each day.
5. Sensible, solution-based rules and guidelines regarding outdoor play.
6. All staff are CPR and First Aid trained.

We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their ability to self-regulate by:

1. Having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years, which provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves, and

with adults.

2. Maintaining the three-year age range allows to create and sustain positive classroom cultures.
3. Offering positive, non-punitive direction to every child to support the classroom communities. This allows the development of harmonious environments throughout the school, which allows children to develop their self-regulation and executive functions.

We foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori play/learn environments in which activities are present for the full range of three ages in each room. There are activities that assist children to become independent or able to assist others in care of the self, care of the environment and care of others (Grace and Courtesy); activities to explore and refine all the senses as well as discover sequencing and order; activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds, and begin to develop the process of writing and reading, and activities to develop number sense, numeracy, understanding of large quantities, the mathematical operations, geometry and even rudimentary algebra concepts and then lots of activities to introduce all the wonderful things in our world. In addition there are activities for cutting, colouring, painting, exploring colour, shape and texture, pasting, etc. Children understand where everything is kept and they are able to choose and return things independently and with their friends.

We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. All Montessori materials are introduced to a child by an adult or by another child, and while the Montessori adults are always observing children to see what support each child might need, they are very sensitive to allowing children their own initiative as this most often results in children being deeply engaged and peaceful in what they are doing. Adults are always trying to find exactly the right moment to introduce a child to something new so that they have enough time to master something but also are always being gently challenged. Choice, respect and responsibility are foundations on which all of our classrooms are built.

We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans.

Children are disciplined in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their actions and their ages in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety; respect the rights of others and maintain equipment. Methods of discipline are discussed at staff meetings, and consistent disciplinary measures are agreed upon.

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at Stirling Montessori. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose work that they are capable of doing and are free to use it as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behaviour of the older children.

We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children by allowing the children to manage a great deal of their day. Children can choose to move about the class carrying things or building things, or sit quietly at a table moving intricate pieces. Children can choose to have snack or a drink when they are hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. We have a large, well equipped, outdoor playground that children access in groups twice or three times each day.

We incorporate indoor play and active play by allowing the children the opportunity to explore the Montessori materials with purpose and towards self-development. Outdoor play is encouraged during recesses and afterschool. Free play takes place in the playground, which includes a grassy area, wood-chipped area, paved section and large sandbox. Each afternoon, those children who still nap are offered a nap time, and those who are pre-school and not napping are offered a quiet work cycle in the afternoon.

We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.

During the school year, parent teacher interviews are arranged with the child's teacher. However, at the parent's request, the teacher will gladly set up a time to meet with them whenever there is a need. Progress reports are created at the end of each year.

Administration communication responsibilities:

1. Social Media
2. Direct email/telephone communication
3. Monthly newsletter with calendar/event updates
4. Update and maintain policy and procedure manuals
5. Update and maintain staff and parent handbook
6. Tours and observations for prospective parents
7. Annual orientation for parents

Staff communication responsibilities:

1. Reports
2. Parent Teacher Interviews
3. Email communication
4. Parent education evenings (with admin)

We are also involved in local **community activities** with the children:

1. Concert
2. Field trips to local attractions; parks
3. Guest speakers from community & parent community

We represent the Montessori community and take support from local professional organizations like CCMA. We are connected with local services for resources for children who need support (speech, OT, developmental etc.).

We support our staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning by offering the staff opportunities to attend conferences or visit other Montessori or non-Montessori environments for observations. We also return to school one week prior to the children, at which time all staff review and complete all necessary documentation required by CCEYA. At the beginning of each year, our staff set goals for themselves in discussion with administration and together plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. We have a budget dedicated to Professional Development that any staff person can access depending on their particular needs. We have Professional Development days set aside each year. Each staff member also spends time at least once a year observing in another's class.

We support the staff who interact with the children by offering mentorship, respect, trust and support.

We use Montessori principles as a frame for our staff community, principles that nurture excellence, support, and character in our staff.

We plan for and create positive learning environments by following the Montessori method of child development. Montessori programs have been shown to develop executive function, gentle play by connecting to the social, emotional and cognitive developmental needs of the child. Each class is comprised of a three year mixed age group which, reflective of society as a whole, creates a community where children are free to progress at their own pace, learning from each other, under the guidance of a trained adult.

We document in several ways: Daily Logs, Monthly & Weekly Lesson Planning, Work Folders; Monthly Newsletters; E-mail Updates; Photos. We track all lessons given, all work engaged in and observe and communicate anecdotal information on each unique child and on the class as a whole. We observe and discuss concerns regarding social, emotional, developmental or academic challenges and are determined to support these challenges acutely and in a timely fashion. We have regular staff meetings to encourage strong communication between staff.

Each year we examine our program statement to ensure it remains true to our vision during our annual prep week. At each staff meeting we examine aspects of the program statement to ensure that we are following through on our vision. We also review the impact of the strategies set out in this program statement on the children and their families. This is logged in minutes from the meetings.

Stirling Montessori believes that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Montessori pedagogy places the child at the centre of the learning environment with staff and materials as a means of taking on the mantle of their own development. We have freedom of choice – within limits. The child is given a lesson and then offered the opportunity to come to a deeper understanding through their own efforts and engagement.

Stirling Montessori supports the CCEYA initiatives in creating evidence based, developmentally rich learning environments for the children of Ontario.

Staff will sign-off that they have reviewed the Program Statement each year as a requirement of employment. This signed document will be kept in the staff file. Staff is monitored each year to ensure that they are in compliance with the approaches set out in our Program Statement. If any staff is not in compliance*, this will be noted on the staff monitoring form. This will be discussed with staff and they will be given the opportunity to comply. They will be monitored shortly thereafter to ensure compliance. Should they still not be in non-compliance, a meeting will occur with the Directors to discuss. It will be up to the Directors to determine the employee's eligibility to continue at Stirling Montessori. Copies of the staff monitoring will be kept secure in the staff file for no less than three (3) years.

*Not in compliance, or prohibited practices include, but are not limited to:

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

O. Reg.126/16, s. 34

Should any staff engage in any of the above behaviours, they will immediately be addressed by Administration. An Employee Incident form will be filled out and kept on record. Should the behaviour happen again, staff will meet with the Directors. It will be up to the Directors to decide on the appropriate action.

Date of review: August 2022

STIRLING MONTESSORI ACADEMY POLICIES

Child Care Centre Sleep Supervision Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: Stirling Montessori Academy

Date Policy and Procedures Established: October 12, 2018

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: August 25, 2023

Purpose

Children's sleep and rest play an integral part in a child's well-being and development. The purpose of this policy and procedures described within is to provide staff, students and volunteers with rules and procedures to follow to safeguard children from harm, injury or death while sleeping.

The procedures provided for placing children under 12 months of age on their own backs for sleep align with the requirement to meet the recommendations set out in Health Canada's document entitled "[Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada](#)".

Procedures for monitoring sleeping children reduce the risk of harm or injury so that caregivers can look for and identify signs of distress and implement immediate responses to protect the health and safety of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for sleep policies for child care centres.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- All children will be provided with the opportunity to sleep or engage in quiet activities based on their needs.
- All children 18 months and older will be provided time to sleep for a period of no more than two hours each day, and will be assigned to a cot.
- Where children are sleeping in a separate sleep room or area, their names will be listed on the Nap Room Attendance and Nap Room Floorplan so that staff can immediately identify which children are present in the room/area.

Placement of Children for Sleep

- Children over 18 months of age who sleep will be placed on individual cots for sleep.

Consultation with Parents

- All parents of children who regularly sleep at the child care centre will be advised of the centre's policies and procedures regarding sleep at the time of their child's enrolment and/or any time the policies and procedures are revised, as applicable. This information will be available to parents in the Parent Handbook.
- Supervisor will consult with parents about their child's sleeping arrangements at the time of enrolment and at any other appropriate time (e.g. when a child transitions to a new program or room, or at the parent's request).
- Written documentation will be kept in each child's file to reflect the sleep patterns identified by their parent, and updates to the documentation will be made whenever changes are communicated to the child care centre.
- All sleep arrangements will be communicated to program staff by the Supervisor after meeting with the parent/guardian.
- Parents will be advised by the supervising staff of any significant changes in their child's behaviours during sleep and/or sleeping patterns.
- Staff will document their observations of changes in a child's sleep behaviours in the daily written record.
- Any changes in sleep behaviours will result in adjustments being made to the child's supervision during sleep time, where appropriate, based on consultation with the child's parent. Staff are required to meet the needs of the child and will provide a nap if they feel it meets the child's needs.

Additional Policy Statements

- Reduced ratio can be implemented when children are sleeping or on their cots. Regular ratios are implemented once children are awake and off their cots.

Glossary

Adequate lighting: Room to be bright enough for the staff in the room to be able to clearly see each child.

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre.

Parent: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family (all references to parent include legal guardians, but will be referred to as "parent" in the policy).

Staff (Employee): An individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff)

Child Care Centre Waiting List Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: Stirling Montessori Academy

Date Policy and Procedures Established: October 12, 2018

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: August 25, 2023

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within provide for waiting lists to be administered in a transparent manner. It supports the availability of information about the waiting list for prospective parents in a way that maintains the privacy and confidentiality of children.

The procedures provide steps that will be followed to place children on the waiting list, offer admission, and provide parents with information about their child's position on the waiting list.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a child care centre that maintains a waiting list to have related policies and procedures.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this plan are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- SMA will strive to accommodate all requests for the registration of a child at the child care centre.
- Where the maximum capacity of a program has been reached and spaces are unavailable for new children to be enrolled, the waiting list procedures set out below will be followed.
- No fee will be charged to parents for placing a child on the waiting list.

Procedures

Receiving a Request to Place a Child on the Waiting List

1. The licensee or designate will receive parental requests to place children on a waiting list via email or completion of form at the school.

Placing a child on the Waiting List

1. The licensee or designate will place a child on the waiting list in chronological order, based on the date and time that the request was received.
2. Once a child has been placed on the waiting list, the licensee or designate will confirm with the parents that the child has been added.

Determining Placement Priority when a Space Becomes Available

1. When space becomes available in the program, priority will be given to children who are currently enrolled and require a program change; siblings of children currently enrolled; children of staff; alumni families.
2. Once these children have been placed, other children on the waiting list will be prioritized based on program room availability and the chronology in which the child was placed on the waiting list.

Offering an Available Space

1. Parents of children on the waiting list will be notified via email that a space has become available in their requested program.
2. Parents will be provided a timeframe in which a response is required before the next child on the waiting list will be offered the space.
3. Where a parent has not responded within the given timeframe, the licensee or designate will contact the parent of the next child on the waiting list to offer them the space.

Responding to Parents who inquire about their Child's Placement on the Waiting List

1. Director/Supervisor will be the contact person for parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's place on the waiting list.
2. Director/Supervisor will respond to parent inquiries and provide the child's current position on the list and an estimated likelihood of the child being offered a space in the program.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

1. The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waiting list will be provided to parents.
2. Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

Glossary

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre.

Parent: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family (all references to parent include legal guardians, but will be referred to as "parent" in the policy)

Emergency Management Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: Stirling Montessori Academy

Date Policy and Procedures Established: November 13, 2018

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: January 10, 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for staff and licensees to follow to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

Definitions

All-Clear: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster no longer pose a danger and it is deemed safe to return to the child care premises and/or resume normal operations.

Authority: A person or entity responsible for providing direction during an emergency situation (e.g. emergency services personnel, the licensee).

Emergency: An urgent or pressing situation where immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults in attendance. These include situations that may not affect the whole child care centre (e.g. child-specific incidents) and where 911 is called.

Emergency Services Personnel: persons responsible for ensuring public safety and mitigating activities in an emergency (e.g. law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, rescue services).

Evacuation Site: the designated off-site location where shelter is obtained during an emergency. The evacuation site is used when it is deemed unsafe to be at or return to the child care centre.

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Meeting Place: the designated safe place near the child care centre where everyone is to initially gather before proceeding to the evacuation site, or returning to the child care centre if evacuation is not necessary.

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program staff, supervisor).

Unsafe to Return: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster continue to pose a danger and it is unsafe to return to the child care premises.

Policy

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document by following these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response;
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the child care centre, the **meeting place** to gather immediately will be located at: the playground

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the child care centre, the **evacuation site** to proceed to is located at: 12 Martin Street, Milton, Ontario

Note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, Director/Supervisor will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by Staff in the daily written record.

Procedures

Phase 1: Immediate Emergency Response

Emergency Situation	Roles and Responsibilities
Lockdown	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The staff member who becomes aware of the threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible. 2) Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone who is outdoors proceeds to a safe location. 3) Staff inside the child care centre must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • gather all children and move them away from doors and windows; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • take shelter in closets and/or under furniture with the children, if appropriate; • keep children calm; • ensure children remain in the sheltered space; • turn off/mute all cellular phones; and • wait for further instructions. 4) If possible, staff inside the program room(s) should also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close all window coverings and doors; • barricade the room door; • gather emergency medication; and • join the rest of the group for shelter. 5) Director/Supervisor will immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close and lock all child care centre entrance/exit doors, if possible; and • take shelter. <p>Note: only emergency service personnel are allowed to enter or exit the child care centre during a lockdown.</p>

<p>Hold & Secure</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the external threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>2) Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone returns to their program room(s) immediately.</p> <p>3) Staff in the program room must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • close all window coverings and windows in the program room; • continue normal operations of the program; and • wait for further instructions. <p>4) Director/Supervisor must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close and lock all entrances/exits of the child care centre; • close all blinds and windows outside of the program rooms; and • place a note on the external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre. <p>Note: only emergency services personnel are allowed to enter or exit the centre during a hold and secure.</p>
<p>Bomb Threat</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the threat or Director/Supervisor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • call 911 if emergency services is not yet aware of the situation; • follow the directions of emergency services personnel; and • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for. <p>A. Where the threat is received by telephone, the person on the phone should try to keep the suspect on the line as long as possible while another individual calls 911 and communicates with emergency services personnel.</p> <p>B. Where the threat is received in the form of a suspicious package, staff must ensure that no one approaches or touches the package at any time.</p>

Disaster Requiring Evacuation	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the disaster must inform all other staff of the incident and that the centre must be evacuated, as quickly and safely as possible. If the disaster is a fire, the fire alarm pull station must be used and staff must follow the centre's fire evacuation procedures.</p> <p>2) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• remain calm;• gather all children, the attendance record, children's emergency contact information any emergency medication;• exit the building with the children using the nearest safe exit, bringing children's outdoor clothing (if possible) according to weather conditions;• escort children to the meeting place; and• take children's attendance to confirm all children are accounted for;• keep children calm; and• wait for further instructions. <p>3) If possible, staff should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• take a first aid kit; and• gather all non-emergency medications. <p>4) Designated staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child's individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and• in doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation.• If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them 58 Johnson Road, Brantford and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and• wait for further instructions. <p>5) If possible, the site designate must conduct a walk-through of the child care centre to verify that everyone has exited the building and secure any windows or doors, unless otherwise directed by emergency services personnel.</p>
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<p>Disaster – External Environmental Threat</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the external environmental threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible and, according to directions from emergency services personnel, advise whether to remain on site or evacuate the premises.</p> <p>If remaining on site:</p> <p>1) Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room immediately.</p> <p>2) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • close all program room windows and all doors that lead outside (where applicable); • seal off external air entryways located in the program rooms (where applicable); • continue with normal operations of the program; and • wait for further instructions. <p>3) Director/Supervisor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seal off external air entryways not located in program rooms (where applicable); • place a note on all external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre until further notice; and • turn off all air handling equipment (i.e. heating, ventilation and/or air conditioning, where applicable). <p>If emergency services personnel otherwise direct the child care centre to evacuate, follow the procedures outlined in the “Disaster Requiring Evacuation” section of this policy.</p>
<p>Natural Disaster: Tornado / Tornado Warning</p>	<p>1) <i>The staff member who becomes aware of the tornado or tornado warning must inform all other staff as quickly and safely as possible.</i></p> <p>2) Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room(s) immediately.</p> <p>3) <i>Staff must immediately:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • <i>gather all children;</i> • <i>go to the basement or take shelter in small interior ground floor rooms such as washrooms, closets or hallways;</i> • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • <i>remain and keep children away from windows, doors and exterior walls;</i> • keep children calm; • conduct ongoing visual checks of the children; and • wait for further instructions.

Natural Disaster: Major Earthquake	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Staff in the program room must immediately:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• remain calm;• instruct children to find shelter under a sturdy desk or table and away from unstable structures;• ensure that everyone is away from windows and outer walls;• help children who require assistance to find shelter;• for individuals in wheelchairs, lock the wheels and instruct the individual to duck as low as possible, and use a strong article (e.g. shelf, hard book, etc.) to protect their head and neck;• find safe shelter for themselves;• visually assess the safety of all children.; and• wait for the shaking to stop.2) Staff members who are outdoors with children must immediately ensure that everyone outdoors stays away from buildings, power lines, trees, and other tall structures that may collapse, and wait for the shaking to stop.3) Once the shaking stops, staff must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gather the children, their emergency cards and emergency medication; and• exit the building through the nearest safe exit, where possible, in case of aftershock or damage to the building.4) If possible, prior to exiting the building, staff should also:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• take a first aid kit; and• gather all non-emergency medications.5) Individuals who have exited the building must gather at the meeting place and wait for further instructions.6) Designated staff will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child's individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and• in doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation.• If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to 58 Johnson Road, Brantford and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and• wait for further instructions.7) The site designate must conduct a walkthrough of the child care centre to ensure all individuals have evacuated, where possible.
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Phase 2: Next Steps During the Emergency

- 1) Where emergency services personnel are not already aware of the situation, Director/Supervisor must notify emergency services personnel (911) of the emergency as soon as possible.
- 2) Where the child care centre has been evacuated, emergency services must be notified of individuals remaining inside the building, where applicable.
- 3) If the licensee is not already on site, the site designate must contact the licensee to inform them of the emergency situation and the current status, once it is possible and safe to do so.

List of Emergency Contact Persons – Milton:

Local Police Department:	905-878-5511 (490 Childs Dr, Milton)
Ambulance:	905-878-2383 (Milton District Hospital)
Local Fire Services:	905-878-9251 (610 Savoline Blvd, Milton)
Site Supervisor:	Claire Cumpstey – 416-895-4608 Caley Ruzzier – 647-299-0315
Licensee Contact(s):	Claire Cumpstey – 416-895-4608 Caley Ruzzier – 647-299-0315
Child Care Centre Site Designate:	Claire Cumpstey – 416-895-4608 Caley Ruzzier – 647-299-0315
Designated Staff:	Angela Wajih – 905-599-6715 (Milton)

- 4) Where any staff, students and/or volunteers are not on site, Director/Supervisor must notify these individuals of the situation, and instruct them to proceed directly to the evacuation site if it is not safe or practical for them return to the child care centre.
- 5) Director/Supervisor must wait for further instructions from emergency services personnel. Once instructions are received, they must communicate the instructions to staff and ensure they are followed.
- 6) Throughout the emergency, staff will:
 - help keep children calm;
 - take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
 - conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
 - maintain constant supervision of the children; and
 - engage children in activities, where possible.
- 7) In situations where injuries have been sustained, staff with first aid training will assist with administering first aid. Staff must inform emergency personnel of severe injuries requiring immediate attention and assistance.
- 8)

8a) Procedures to Follow When “All-Clear” Notification is Given	
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The individual who receives the ‘all-clear’ from an authority must inform all staff that the ‘all-clear’ has been given and that it is safe to return to the child care centre. 2) Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals with returning to the child care centre. 3) Staff must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • escort children back to their program room(s), where applicable; • take attendance upon returning to the program room(s) to ensure that all children are accounted for; where applicable; and • re-open closed/sealed blinds, windows and doors. 4) Director/Supervisor will determine if operations will resume and communicate this decision to staff.
Communication with parents/guardians	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As soon as possible, Director/Supervisor must notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given. 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the child care centre, Director/Supervisor must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by email. 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, Director/Supervisor must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

8b) Procedures to Follow When “Unsafe to Return” Notification is Given	
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The individual who receives the ‘unsafe to return’ notification from an authority must inform all staff of this direction and instruct them to proceed from the meeting place to the evacuation site, or the site determined by emergency services personnel. 2) Staff must take attendance to confirm that all children are accounted for, and escort children to the evacuation site. 3) Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals to the evacuation site. 4) Director/Supervisor will post a note for parents/guardians on the child care centre entrance with information on the evacuation site, where it is possible and safe to do so. 5) Upon arrival at the evacuation site, staff must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • help keep children calm; • engage children in activities, where possible; • conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children; • maintain constant supervision of the children; • keep attendance as children are picked up by their parents, guardians or authorized pick-up persons; and • remain at the evacuation site until all children have been picked up.
Communication with parents/guardians	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, Director/Supervisor will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children. 2) Where possible, Director/Supervisor will update the child care centre’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

Phase 3: Recovery (After an Emergency Situation has Ended)

Procedures for Resuming Normal Operations	1) Director/Supervisor will contact the Ministry of Education PA regarding readiness to reopen the centre. Director/Supervisor will liaise and respond to any media or community inquiries and will advise all centre families and staff of the time and date of reopening via email. All services for the centre (including catering, janitorial, insurance etc. will be contacted and advised of reopening).
Procedures for Providing Support to	Any staff or children who require support due to distress will be contacted by the Director/Supervisor with recommendations for leave or support.

Children and Staff who Experience Distress	
Procedures for Debriefing Staff, Children and Parents/Guardians	<p>Director/Supervisor must debrief staff, children and parents/guardians after the emergency.</p> <p>Information will be sent out to all staff and parents/guardians via email. A meeting will be arranged for all staff, parents/guardians and children at an alternative location to debrief them.</p>

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: Stirling Montessori Academy

Date Policy and Procedures Established: October 12, 2018

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: August 25, 2023

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

Policy

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Stirling Montessori Academy and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within one business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

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

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our school maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

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

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

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

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom staff directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within one business day. <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date and time the issue/concern was received;
<p>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
<p>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within [insert number] business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>
<p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor and/or licensee. <p>-</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>

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

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

Claire Cumpstey/Caley Ruzzier, Director/Supervisor – info@stirlingmontessori.com

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

