



Revised
2017

Little Star Play School

Handbook



Contents:

- 1. Little Star Philosophy**
- 2. The Teacher's Role**
- 3. The Parental Role**
- 4. Parent's Responsibilities**
- 5. Daily Schedule**
- 6. Rules & Regulations**
- 7. Snack Time**
- 8. Emergency Evacuations**
- 9. School Fees & Hours of Operation**
- 10. Tid Bits**
- 11. Supply List**
- 12. Administration**
- 13. Policies**

1.

Little Star Play School Philosophy

The philosophy of Little Star is that children learn through play. Play is a child's "work" and they learn and develop many skills while at play. It is our job to provide a safe, creative, stimulating environment from which a child will have many opportunities to choose activities that will help build these skills. We aim to encourage growth of the child's SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, CREATIVE and EMOTIONAL SKILLS otherwise known as S. P. I. C. E. Play is a central and necessary part of a child's development. It is an activity a child has freely chosen. It is under his/her control and is not dominated or imposed by an adult. Play is how children begin to learn in a risk-free environment. Play provides a natural opportunity for young children to add to their knowledge, learn new skills, and practice familiar ones. Play provides many situations where the child observes, discovers, reasons, and solves problems. The emphasis of our program will be directed towards optimizing each child's potential, as well as encouraging personal growth, development, and involvement in a cooperative manner. The greatest skills we can give our children are strong pro social skills and a love of learning. The best gift we can give to children is to send them out into the world with self confidence, compassion and a drive to accomplish. Our program aims to help nurture these strengths and help each child be proud of their individuality! They are all Super Stars even if they are Little! We are proud to be a part of their development!

2.

The Teacher's Role

The teachers' role in the program is to set up the classroom to be aesthetically pleasing, clean, organized and creatively inspiring. They are responsible to help with communication and work co-operatively with the children to assist with problem solving and building social skills. They will be compassionate and help build self confidence with praise and encouragement. The teacher will observe and learn what the children's' interests are so as to build the curricula accordingly and expand on the curiosity and development of those interests as well as introduce new concepts and ideas that will benefit the child as they move into Kindergarten. The teacher is the nurturer for the short time that the parent is absent during the program and will make the environment a comfortable and safe place in which to play and learn. Staff will act in a courteous & professional manner & will not take care of personal issues during school.

All teachers are certified with a minimum of childcare assistant and a criminal record check. At least one teacher in each class will have First Aid level C. Teachers are all encouraged to continue their education process whether that includes attending college, workshops and/or conferences.

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

~Malcolm S. Forbes

3.

The Parental Role

The Parental role can be as limited or as involved in the class as one chooses. Parents are always welcome in the program and are encouraged to participate whenever able, especially on the child's "Special Day". It makes the child feel extra special that you care to spend time and show interest in what they do at school! We also welcome grandparents, aunts, uncles & special family friends to participate in the parents' place with arrangements made with teachers prior to their arrival. Each child will have the opportunity to sign up for a minimum of 2 "Special Days" throughout the year.

We will have parties and field trips and always welcome extra hands on deck for these affairs, sign up will be sent via email. For parties, we will usually have a pot luck sign up and we encourage parents to be creative & healthy with their snacks!! When helping in the school please "play" and show attention to your child! If we need assistance we will surely ask but we want your time with your child to be a special memory for you to share!

Parents are asked to participate in the monthly Toy Cleans if at all possible so as to cut down on sicknesses and keep the classroom healthy! "Special Incentive Draws" will take place to entice you but, once you come and enjoy the company of the teachers and parents; you will be back for the socialization & fun of it all!!

4.

The Parents' Responsibilities

Parents are required to sign in/out their child every class or have an assigned caregiver to do so. The child will not be dismissed until we see parent/caregiver in the school.

Parents are responsible to sign their child up for their Special Days on the calendar posted on the shelves by the Sign in area. (Each child receives a min. of 2 days per year)

Parents are responsible to read the monthly newsletters which will be sent out via e-mail or viewable on the website and keep informed on activities and dates for the month.

Parents are responsible to sign in/out any medications that need to be kept on hand for their child.

Parents are responsible to make sure fees are paid on time every month.

Parents are responsible to drop off and pick up children on time, because our class time is limited it is most beneficial to start as soon as possible and it is very stressful for the child to be the last one picked up, please try to call if you will be late. The staff also needs sufficient time to set up for the next program, be on time for pick up of the after school program & is not on the clock during lunch so please be respectful of our time.

Parents are responsible to update their child's personal information as necessary.

****We ask that parents kindly refrain from smoking in view of the children ****

5.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule will consist of blocks of free time where the child will choose which centres he/she is interested in playing at as well as structured blocks of time where circle time and other structured activities will take place. Throughout the year, there will be different "Themes" recognizable at the different centres such as Seasonal Affairs, Wild Animals, Vet, Transportation, Pirates and Princesses, Cowpoke, Farm and many more.

*An example of a basic day looks something like this:

- Start of class....Greeting, Sign In
- Free play
- Clean Up
- Circle Time.....May consist of songs, stories, finger plays, sharing, and calendar time.
- Art Experience
- Hand washing
- Snack (optional, we do not force the children to eat, it is a child choice based activity)
- Free Play
- Clean Up
- Circle Time
- Good-Bye and Sign Out

The curricula will include monthly fire drills and special occasions!

6.

Rules & Regulations

- If your child becomes sick at school, parents will be called to pick up; child will be separated from the group & kept comfortable until pick up. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called.
- Staff is not able to wipe bottoms (licensing rule), if a child has an accident and cannot be directed to clean his/herself; parents will be called and required to come in and take care of the issue. We will assist with changing of clothes.
- We are a Peanut Free Facility.
- Please clearly label all your child's belongings including outer wear, footwear and lunchboxes.
- No chewing gum allowed at any time.
- No hats to be worn at snack time.
- Please keep toys at home unless it is "show and tell".
- Siblings are only permitted at certain times unless they are babes in arms in which case non-mobile babies can accompany parents into the classroom at anytime.
- If for some reason, you decide to withdraw your child from the program, a minimum notice of one month or one month's fees in lieu of notice is required.
- There is a zero tolerance of bullying or abusive behaviour to students, parents and/or staff, parents will refrain from any corporal punishment on site and save adult discussions for outside school times/ away from small ears.

7.

Snack Time

Due to allergies, each child must bring his/her own snack daily. An allergy list will be posted in the school.

We are a Peanut Free Facility so please watch ingredients closely.

Please bring your child's snack in a clearly labelled lunch box or bag and label any containers inside as well. We suggest you follow the Canadian Food Guide and send a small snack from 2 food groups with an attempt at healthy snacks and steering clear from sugary pre-packaged items. Please send a drink, preferably water in a reusable container but milk, juice etc...are acceptable. Keep in mind that snack is child choice and we will not ever force a child to have snack. That being said, please make snack enjoyable for your child by including them in the decision process and even the packing! Make sure containers are easy to open and that snacks are not too messy for self service.

We do not want juice boxes as the children waste the contents and we are constantly spending time dumping them out! Waste not, want not!

Some snack suggestions:

Cheese	Sandwiches	Pita Bread
Crackers	Cold Cuts/ Sausage Rings	Hard Boiled Eggs
Yoghurt	Pickles/Cucumbers	Spreads (Tuna/Egg)
Fruit	Wraps	Cherry Tomatoes
Apple Sauce	Muffins	Pretzels
Veggies/Dip	Cottage Cheese	Dried Fruits

8.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of a fire or other emergency that would require evacuation, the following would take place:

- Class would exit through the nearest safe exit
- Attendance would be taken (portable emergency records are always taken whenever we go offsite)
- Once everyone was accounted for, staff would walk children to our designated meeting spot which is the Town Office (located at 5018 Waghorn St)
- Staff would ensure children are safe and reassure them
- Parents/Emergency Contacts would be called

Every month, an impromptu fire drill will take place to acclimate the children in case of a real emergency (Our meet place for practice drills is the benches to the north of our building). This may seem scary to some children so it may be wise to practice the same at home and have talks with them to reassure and educate. We will have the Blackfalds Fire Department come in to clock our exit times and give a speech to the children. We also hope to continue with our annual trip to the fire hall.

In the event your child should incur an accident while at school, staff will provide proper medical attention and call parents as soon as possible. If the child needed to be transported, an ambulance would be called.

9.

School Fees & Hours of Operation

At Little Star, we offer both 2 and 3 day a week classes.

2 day a week classes run Tuesdays & Thursdays (must be 3 by Dec 31) @ \$100.00/month

- If spots are available, you may register your child the month they turn 3

3 day a week classes (must be 4 by Dec 31) run Mon-Wed-Fri @ \$140.00/month

AM classes start at 8:45am and conclude at 11:15am daily (revised July 6, 2017)

PM classes start at 12:00pm and conclude at 2:30pm daily (revised July 6, 2017)

* The front door will remain locked during programming for safety reasons. If you need to get our attention, please knock on the front window, not the door so we have a better chance of hearing/seeing you!

Little Star follows the Wolf Creek School Division Calendar and will be closed on all PD days, Wolf Creek weather cancellation days and Stats. There may be some exceptions as we may have a different start date and finish date for the year and occasionally we may offer an offsite class on a PD Day if feasible.

*****Please check your local radio stations, including their websites for school closure announcements throughout the winter. I will do my best to e-mail school closures out as well but if Wolf Creek makes the call, you can assume we are closed. The safety of our Little Stars Families & our Staff come first!!*****

10.

Tid Bits!

- If you have small household items that you don't need but may be useful for us for crafts or dramatic play such as buttons, costume jewellery, pastas of all shapes, old decorations, fabric, toys, etc...Little Star would gladly accept them as long as they are clean, safe and in good repair.
- If you have a special talent like card making, baking, crafting, musical abilities, sewing, etc... and would like to share it with your child's class or have extra time to donate for cutting out art projects or helping with scholastic book orders, we love help & would happily use your skills!!
- Please take home your child's art and other items from their bin daily, anything left for an extended length of time will be tossed in an attempt to keep our school tidy and clutter free!
- Please remove footwear if you are coming past the sign-in counter, we need to keep our school floors clean as the children spend time playing on the floor!
- Your feedback, opinions & ideas matter, please feel free to share them with us! I am always looking for ways to improve the programs!
- Don't forget to hug your child and then hug them again for me and my staff!

11.

Supply List

- **Indoor Footwear:** Must be clean, easy to get on and labelled with child's name. Can be anything from runners to slippers to crocs and does not have to be new as long as it is clean. These will be kept in the child's bin and must be worn daily for protection and because we will go outside for fire drills &/or real emergencies.
- **Change of Clothes:** Must be in a labelled zip lock bag and include shirt, bottoms, underwear and socks. This will be kept on-site in case of accidents, spills or any other unforeseen need!
- **Lunch Bag:** Each child needs something to transport their snack to and from school. It needs to be clean and labelled with child's name. Also label any containers used to store the snacks.
- **Outer Wear:** Please dress your child appropriately for the weather daily. Please label your child's outside footwear and coats, toques, mitts, etc...We will periodically go outside and it is easier to assist dressing the children when we can clearly see what belongs to whom! We have a small bin for Lost & Found but will donate items to the diabetes bins monthly so please LABEL and check the bin often!
- Any other required items will be delegated to each class before school commences.

12.

Administration

- Each child needs a fully completed registration form including a portable emergency records form with no spaces left blank. Emergency contacts must have a physical street address listed, not a box number.
- Any other pick up/drop off persons must be listed on the registration form or added to child's file via signed note from parent. Identification of person may be requested from staff at their discretion.
- Monthly fees may be paid by either post-dated cheques or e-transfer to littlestarplayschool@hotmail.com dated for the 20th of each prior month, first payment due Aug 20th and last payment due May 20th. Please ensure your child's first and last name accompany payment.
- Anyone paying fees or book orders by means other than cheques can place fees in the locked drop box inside the school, please place cash in an envelope with your child's name, payment description and amount on the front.
- At no time should any staff member other than Miss Becki, accept payment of any kind.
- Should a cheque become NSF, a fee of \$42.50 will be charged as well as that month's fee payment will need to be reissued immediately.
- Receipts will be issued by e-mail at request of parents in January.
- Any serious incidents involving your child will be documented on an incident report and require a parent's signature; a copy will be kept in the child's file.
- Medications will only be given for long standing illnesses and will require a medical form filled out.
- Little Star retains the right to refuse service at their discretion.

Policy List

1. **Child Guidance Policy**
2. **Communication Policy**
3. **Inclusion/Diversity Policy**
4. **Health Policy**
5. **Safety Policy**
6. **Open Door Policy**
7. **Volunteer Policy**
8. **Program Review Policy**

1. Child Guidance Policy

The security of each child in the program is the main responsibility of the staff; we want each child to learn how to communicate their issues and concerns in a constructive manner to limit aggressive behaviors. Staff will help to guide them in the following ways:

- Little Star Staff will continually work to help children learn conflict resolution skills and the phrase "use your words" will often be reiterated.
- Staff will attempt to let children work out conflicts without assistance but will be close by if interference is needed.
- Group talks about feelings and respect will be held often as well as group activities to help the children form bonds.
- Staff will use positive reinforcement and redirection as effective guidance tools.

Bullying:

Little Star is against the act of bullying and we will continually discuss the terms and consequences of such acts with the students in the program. Bullying is defined as persistent behavior by any individual or group which intimidates/threatens or has a harmful or distressing impact on another individual or group. Bullying can be in various forms such as: emotional, physical, racist, verbal, or cyber, some examples may include:

- Not including someone in a group
- Teasing in a hurtful way
- Threatening
- Stealing or destroying someone's personal belongings

- Physically harming someone
- Using put downs
- Spreading rumors
- Insults and/or name calling

Children will be encouraged to talk to staff when they are uncomfortable with how they are being treated. If a parent suspects their child is a victim of bullying in the program, they should communicate their concerns with staff ASAP. Staff will make every attempt to ensure that supervision and intervention of any repeat attempts of bullying behavior are prevented.

If staff feels that a severe incident has occurred or if repetitive incidents have occurred, parents will be contacted and if necessary, the child involved in the act of being dangerously disruptive and/or bullying may be sent home. Recurring incidents may result in expulsion from the program.

2. Communication Policy

Little Star Staff is committed to communicating with families, children, staff members and community members in a respectful and professional manner in order to facilitate positive relationships and create an optimum child care experience.

Family Communication:

The family of the enrolled child has the right to be fully informed of their child's experience and involvement while at the program however drop off and pick up times are a very congested buy time to attempt to communicate during so it is

preferable to contact your child's teachers and set up a time to discuss your child or have a phone conversation outside of school hours.

Written Communication:

Any information pertaining to all families will be made available on a consistent basis via emails, postings on the website and postings on the communication board and sign in center including:

- Monthly Newsletters
- Parent Handbook
- Policy Manual
- Staffing changes
- Reminders of upcoming events
- Community events

Verbal Communication:

Communication is the key in forming positive relationships and Little Star Staff will take each opportunity to welcome parents and children daily as well as making ourselves available for after hour's communications.

Parent Participation and Feedback:

The Little Star Staff will provide parents with the opportunity to offer their feedback regarding the program in the following ways:

- Conversations with Educator's
- Email discussions
- Semi-annual Parent Surveys
- Suggestion Box (wooden drop box or drop slot at front door)

Any information gathered will be reviewed at staff meetings and changes to the program will be made accordingly.

Sharing Child Specific Information:

All personal information pertaining to individual children will be communicated in a formal and confidential manner. Instances of injury, illness and serious incidents of inappropriate behavior will be reviewed with parents and signed by both parents and Miss Becki. A copy of the incident report will be kept in child's file.

Parent Communication Board:

The communication board will contain the following information:

- Licenses
- Monthly Newsletters
- Information from elementary schools
- Outside resources related to children's activities &/ or health/behavioral issues and other related topics.
- Communications from families i.e.: Thank you cards

The board will be updated as new information becomes relevant.

Children:

Little Star Staff interactions and communications with children will be positive and respectful and support the children's social-emotional and intellectual development. Staff will assist the children in developing problem solving skills and conflict resolution skills. Staff will support the children in their feelings and help them to express themselves in a respectful manner.

School:

Little Star has an ongoing relationship with IREC, the local school. We continue to share information and keep the lines of communication strong in order to build our relationship. Any information shared is to be in the best interest of the children and may include but not be limited to:

- Child guidance strategies
- Special needs
- Collaboration on extracurricular activities
- Communicating with school staff to establish good working rapport
- Integration of Pre-K's into Kindergarten

We are excited to have a new relationship with St. Gregory the Great school and will follow along the same guidelines as above.

Community:

Little Star will continue to build relationships with organizations/businesses within the community. We hope to give the children a sense of responsibility and ownership within their community. Field trips and Guest speakers will be planned to fit into the curriculum.

- Little Star will create a file of community resources that will be made available to parents in need of additional support and/or information.
- Little Star will watch for opportunities for community involvement and brainstorm with children ways they can contribute.
- Little Star will work on building these relationships with community organizations to help support the development of the children. These organizations may include: local Fire Dept., RCMP, Neighborhood Place, Dance Studio, Library, Dentist, etc...

3. Inclusion/Diversity Policy

Inclusion is to be included, to hold, to embrace, to involve, to count, among. We are an inclusive program in that all children have equal opportunity to participate in our programming no matter their age, ability, race or religion. We focus on the beauty of being unique and celebrate individuality. We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- Educating ourselves and the children on discriminatory behavior and the harmful effects of such behavior
- Ensuring that the programming offered is inclusive of all children and making special adjustments to ensure support to those with special needs
- Encouraging children to assist each other
- Encouraging children and their parents to share their heritages and traditions
- Displaying multicultural books and items throughout our facility

- We will be respectful of inclusion and diversity and will have resources as well as speakers and activities to educate the children in the program and guide them to be socially inept
- We will provide activities to build friendships and encourage cooperation in order to have a harmonious Little Star Family

4. Health Policy

Little Star Staff will implement health standards and practices that are designed to teach good health habits and protect and maintain the well-being of children and staff.

Hand washing:

Hand washing will be mandatory for children after toileting, before eating, after messy play, after sneezing and/or coughing spells. Staff will also wash hands frequently as well as keeping touchable surfaces clean. This is best practice to ensure the optimum health of children and staff as well as parents and siblings.

Food Handling:

Staff will ensure that everyone handling food:

- Washes hands with soap and water
- Wipes counters and tables before and after use
- Washes all fruits and vegetables, including those that will be peeled
- Ensures that the refrigerator is set at 4 degrees Celsius

Illness:

If a child arrives with or develops any of the following symptoms:

- vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or a new or unexplained rash or cough
- requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program
- develops symptoms that lead a staff to believe the child poses a potential health risk to the other children or staff
- assessment of symptoms of a child included: hot to the touch and observations of unusual behaviour that are not typical for the child

The parents of the child would be called. The child would be separated from the group and made comfortable until parent's arrival. Failure to reach parents would result in staff calling emergency contacts.

The child can return when the program is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to the other participants by providing a note from physician, or parents report that their child has been **Symptom Free** for **24 hours**.

Parents are required to notify program if their child has a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, and lice etc... alternate care will be required until child has a clean bill of health.

Medication:

Medication forms need to be filled out by parent and medication must come in original container with dispensable information on label. Medication can only be administered in the dosage and at the times specified on label. Medication will be

kept locked up unless it is an emergency medication such as an inhaler or epi pen, in which case it will be kept in an accessible location but out of reach of children.

5. Safety Policy

It is Little Star Staff plan to have all staff obtain first aid within a three month period of employment but at minimum, one in every two staff will hold a valid first aid certificate.

A first aid kit will remain onsite at the program and another will be transported on any offsite excursions.

Children will be released to parents or emergency contacts as listed in children's files only. A parent can give consent to grant someone else permission to pick up by means of telephone and or written note including email but staff has the right to ask for a safe word and to ask for identification if they so choose. If there is a legal reason why a parent should not be allowed access to a child, legal documentation needs to be presented stating such and a picture of the parent on the documentation should be provided to staff if possible.

Parents will be required to sign a transportation form and any staff that transports will have a minimum of \$1000000.00 liability insurance. Car/Booster seats will be provided by parents as needed.

Safety checks will be completed of all play areas including outdoor play areas by staff prior to allowing children to play. Staff will have a checklist to use for inspections.

Staff is to ensure the cleanliness of the facility during programming and a cleaning staff will be in weekly to do a thorough clean. Monthly toy cleans will be held to

sanitize toys and wipe down shelving and containers that house the equipment. This will be done by both staff and volunteer parents.

In the event of a dental or medical accident, staff will follow first aid protocol and contact parents/emergency contacts ASAP.

In the event of a fire or other emergency that would require evacuation, the following would take place:

- Class would exit through the nearest safe exit
- Attendance would be taken (portable emergency records are always taken whenever we go offsite)
- Once everyone was accounted for, staff would walk children to our designated meeting spot which is the Town Office (located at 5018 Waghorn St)
- Staff would ensure children are safe and reassure them
- Parents/Emergency Contacts would be called
-

Every month, an impromptu fire drill will take place to familiarize the children in case of a real emergency (Our meet place for practice drills is the benches to the north of our building).

Children are required to have indoor footwear that will be labelled with their name and is required to be kept onsite.

*** *A backpack containing all portable records & a first aid kit will accompany staff on all off-site activities****

6. Open Door Policy

Little Star encourages parents to participate as often as possible in our program. Parents are always welcome but never required to take part in any daily events. Little Star staff will keep parents revised of any upcoming events or excursions and welcome their participation.

7. Volunteer Policy

Any volunteers welcomed into the program will not be left unsupervised while with the children. Volunteers will only be allowed in at the discretion of the director who reserves the right to require a criminal record check as she sees fit. Little Star OSP will invite volunteers in to add enrichment to the programming and/or to mentor and support the staff with the care of the children whether daily or occasionally. Volunteers may be part of special events and may offer knowledge and insight to topics of interest within the programming. All volunteers will be treated with respect and be recognized for the enrichment they are adding to the children's child care experiences.

8. Program Review Policy

Little Star Staff will review our policies annually and will take into consideration the following when making any amendments:

- Parent surveys and feedback collected
- Staff surveys
- Incident report reviews
- New legislation and regulations from the gov't
- Staff meeting minutes

- Staff journals
- Communications with the school &/or other community groups

Any results collected from surveys or suggestions that contribute to any amendments, will be relayed to parents via email, newsletter and/or website blog.