**Memo of Understanding SVP – Covid19**

**May 2020**

In light of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we feel it is important to clarify that Dr. Bonnie Henry has confirmed and encouraged childcares to remain open, where possible, to serve families that are needing childcare.

 Strawberry Vale Preschool will continue to follow all updated protocols and procedures as outlined by the Health Authorities and CDC.

Given these important requirements, it is imperative that we are resolute in our health policy, and that all parents understand and agree to the following additional requirements:

**Provision of Care**

We are currently providing preschool at a reduced capacity.  As such, we are offering spaces to families following a priority system of “COVID-19 Essential Service” roles, Tier 1 (both parents, or in a 1 parent household, 1 parent); Tier 1 (one parent); Tier 2 (both parents, or in a 1 parent household, 1 parent); Tier 2 (one parent); Tier 3.

In accordance with the current regulations: Should a higher Tier family require a space in our facility we are mandated to provide said space if we are running lower than our licensed capacity or give the space occupied by a family that does not qualify within the tier system.

**Minimized frequency of direct physical contact** is a reasonable expectation for the age/development of our preschool children. We do not claim to be able to meet physical distancing in our daily interactions at preschool. Children will be supported to have minimized direct contact with one another and physical distancing strategies will be implemented where possible in the childcare setting amongst staff. Toys and equipment will be designated for each class group and cleaning of high touch surfaces and equipment will meet the new standards of protocol for childcare.

**Illness and Attendance**

Children **may not attend** **Strawberry Vale Preschool**  if they exhibit any symptoms of respiratory illness or fever. Please refer to our new Health Policy \*Posted on our web site.

**There are no exceptions to this illness policy.**

Symptoms associated with COVID-19 are similar to many common respiratory illnesses that may be circulating through schools/childcare settings. The two most important ways to prevent and control respiratory viruses, including COVID-19

• For children and staff who are ill with respiratory illness symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, and/or muscle aches) to **stay home** from preschool and the consistent practice of good respiratory etiquette and **hand hygiene**.

There is an expectation that individuals residing in the household with any child attending **Strawberry Vale Preschool** are to be taking all precautions possible to limit their exposure to COVID-19.

**Withdrawal and Temporary withdrawal**

Our facility has opted into the temporary emergency funding (TEF) program.  This means that for our facility, parents may choose to attend, temporarily withdraw or permanently withdrawal.  This new policy will remain in effect as long as we are in receipt of the TEF program. At the time MCFD ends the TEF program, our regular policies will immediately resume.

If a family chooses to temporarily withdraw their child(ren) due to concerns related to COVID-19, Strawberry Vale Preschool will not charge any fee for the following calendar month or any future months in which the child is withdrawn. If notification of a temporary withdraw of a family’s child(ren) is given on or before the 15th of the month, Strawberry Vale Preschool will refund 50% of the fees charged to that family for that calendar month. Additionally, Strawberry Vale Preschool will allow the family to return to the preschool, if they require it, once the pandemic passes and subject to the child remaining in the applicable age care category. Strawberry Vale Preschool may temporarily fill a vacant space and charge a fee to the family accessing the space temporarily during the current pandemic.

If a family that has withdrawn their child(ren) due to COVID-19 seeks to their original space while the pandemic is still ongoing, Strawberry Vale Preschool will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the family. However, Strawberry Vale Preschool will not ensure that space is available to the original family until the pandemic passes, unless the parent who temporarily withdrew is an essential service worker. Any additional accommodations will be made at the discretion of the executive but will abide by the TEF Guidelines put in place by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

**Temporary Closure:**

If Strawberry Vale Preschool temporarily closes due to COVID-19 and is receiving the TEF for the period of the closure, the preschool will not charge any fees for the duration of the closure. If the preschool closes on or before the 15th of the month and fees have already been paid, the preschool will refund the families 50% of their fees or provide the equivalent credit towards future fee payments. The executive may offer a credit or alternative arrangements in lieu of a refund however all decisions will follow the TEF Guidelines put in place by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

**Arrival/Departure**

Parents are not currently permitted to access our facility. Drop off and sign in will occurat the gate. Please wait with your child at the orange cone markers indicated on the sidewalk, ensuring social distancing (2 meters). Allow space for the family ahead of you to clear the “bridge” area before coming forward to drop off your child.

**Child transition into the yard** \*\***Staggered Drop off in effect**

1. Staff will meet you at the gate to receive your child into the yard. Staff will have you confirm a health check and sign your child in. Emergency contact # must be valid during class time and you must be available for immediate pick up should they display any symptoms outlines in our Health/Illness Policy
2. Your child will hang their backpack on the fence and proceed to wash their hands before going off to play. Food bags, water bottles and daily supplies will be kept in your child’s backpack. Please send your child’s helmet as they will not be provided.

**Child transition at end of program \*\*Staggered Pick up in effect**

1. Please wait outside the fenced yard. We ask that you adhere to the physical distancing markers and wait until the family at the gate has left before moving forward to the gate.
2. Staff will assist your child to wash their hands, gather their belongings and will meet you at the gate to sign out.

**For the well-being of children, staff and families, open transparency and candor is required around all the above requirements. Although this may lead to some challenging conversations, staff and families need to acknowledge and respect their necessity and their intention of care during the pandemic. We sincerely appreciate your compliance and understanding.**