



Our Mission is to provide our children with an authentic Montessori environment that will inspire a lifelong love of learning.

Casa

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St. Catharines, ON
L2S 2T4

905-704-1388
info@nelephant.ca

Toddler

64 Louth Street
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L2S 2T4

905-641-9736
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Website: www.nelephant.ca

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide our children with an authentic Montessori environment that will inspire a lifelong love of learning.

To achieve the mission statement, the school provides:

- An environment which fosters individual development
- An environment which encourages our children to reach their fullest potential
- Our children with the skills for advanced independent learning
- Our children with activities conducive to their physical development
- Our families with information and the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning.

Index

Introduction: Covid-19 Protocols

1- Nelephant Montessori Program Statement

2- Parent Responsibilities

3- Days and Hours of Operation

- a. Hours of Operation Toddler and Casa
- b. School Closures
- c. Arrival and Dismissal Procedure

4- Helpful Hints

- a. School Preparedness
- b. Helpful Hints – Toddler
- c. Helpful Hints – Casa

5- Health and Safety

- a. Nutrition, Medications, Clothing
- b. When to Keep My Child Home
- c. Quality Child Care Niagara Screening (QCCN)

6- Policies

- a. Admissions and Discharge Policy
- b. Sleep and Rest Policy
- c. Outdoor Program, Excursions and Special Visitors
- d. Bagged Lunch Policy
- e. Emergency Management Statement
- f. Anaphylaxis Policy
- g. Supervision for Volunteers and Students
- h. Program Statement Implementation Policy
- i. Prohibited Practices
- j. Waitlist Policy
- k. Serious Occurrence Policy
- l. Parent Issues and Concerns Policy
- m. Accommodation for Children Policy
- n. Dismissal from School Policy
- o. Covid-19 Policies

Introduction

Dear Parents,

As we are getting ready to reopen for our second school year during a pandemic, Nelephant wants to make sure we are all on the same page. While we know this can be an uncertain time since none of us have ever experienced this before, the teachers and administration at Nelephant are committed to providing a quality Montessori program that is safe, educational, child-friendly, and fun!

While the focus of this guidance document is on the health, safety and operational measures that are required in order to safely re-open, please note that every effort will continue to be made to uphold the welcoming and caring environment that Nelephant has always provided for its children and families.

While many things will seem different with new procedures in place for safety of all, this will still be a Montessori environment that fosters inquiry and experiential learning. It is our goal to draw out and inspire the best in our students as we provide them with opportunities to create, explore, and learn.

This handbook will lay out the changes as we enter the next phase from this COVID-19 pandemic. This situation is unprecedented and is constantly evolving, so all changes included in this handbook will remain as the “new protocol” until further notice. We will make sure that all changes are realistic and feasible for staff and children by following NPH (Niagara Public Health) and Ministry of Education (Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014) guidelines. Please be sure to read through this information carefully.

Nelephant will be following the Provincial Guidelines and require that all staff, student teachers, and regular visitors provide proof of being fully vaccinated. Those who are not vaccinated, including those with medical exemptions, will be required to complete regular Covid-19 testing as directed in provincial guidance.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the policies and procedures that are outlined in this Parent Handbook. They are in place to ensure that Nelephant is a safe and enjoyable place for your family.

Sincerely,
The Nelephant Staff

Health Screens

Health Screens will be completed daily for all staff and children prior to arriving at Nelephant with the online Health Screen form. You are required to send in a Health Screen even if you are keeping your child home from school, unless otherwise directed by the school.

- Location:
 - Toddlers will be screened outside at their entrance door.
 - Casa 1 children will be screened at the Front Door of the Casa building.
 - Casa 2 children will be screened at the door at the back of Casa 2 on the South side of the building.
- Pick-up and drop-off of children will happen from the playground whenever possible.
 - Pick-up for the Casa children will happen from the playground. Please park and walk to the gate to pick up your child.
 - On rainy days, Casa 1 children will be dismissed from the front door of the school and Casa 2 children will be dismissed from the back door of Casa 2 on the South side of the building.
- Drop off times will be between 8:30-9:00am at the stated locations.
- Pick-up times are between 3:30-4:00pm for Full-Day children at the stated locations.
- Pick up time for Toddler Half-Day children is 11:30am.
- Pick up times for Casa Half-Day children is between 12:15-12:20pm.
- Visual guides will be provided to assist with physical distancing (e.g., pylons/chalk on the ground) in the event that a line-up forms while parents/guardians and their children are waiting to be screened prior to entering into the school. We ask for your patience while we complete the very important process each morning.
- Casa Location: If there is no parking available in our lot, please park in the DSBN Academy lot up along our playground fence and come through the walkway on the right of our playground.

Health Screening Procedure:

- Staff and children will complete and submit the online Health Screen form prior to arriving at Nelephant.
- All individuals, including children and staff must be screened before entry to the school using the procedures below.
- Nelephant will deny entry to any person who has failed the current Health Screen.
- Parents are required to keep any sick children at home. If a child or staff member comes to school with any COVID-like symptoms or develops them while here, including a temperature equal to or greater than 37.8 degrees Celsius, or if the child(ren) have any signs or symptoms listed on the current Health Screen, they will be isolated and sent home immediately.
- Screeners will take appropriate precautions when screening, including maintaining a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) from those being screened, or wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e., medical mask and eye protection).

- Hand sanitizer will be used by all staff and children upon entering the building.

Questions for staff and families:

- Everyone will be greeted at the designated entrance to Nelephant with a friendly, calm manner. We request that only ONE parent/guardian enters the screening area with the child, and request that the parent/guardian use hand sanitizer if they have to fill out a paper form.
- All parents/guardians coming to the Health Screening area are required to wear a mask.
- The most updated Health Form must be answered by parents/guardians and staff. This form may change throughout the year under guidance of Public Health.

Responses:

If the parent/guardian or staff answers NO to all questions, they have passed the screening and the child/staff can enter the building:

- Designated staff will take children to their classrooms.
- Staff will use proper hand hygiene between children.

If the individual fails the Health Screen, or refuses to answer, they cannot enter the building.

- The staff or family will be told to return home and self-isolate immediately.
- If a child or staff member is denied entry at screening, they must contact their doctor or complete the self-assessment screening online and follow the guidance based on those results: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Documentation of Screening:

Documentation of the information received during active screening must be recorded on Nelephant's Health Screen Log sheets for children and staff. The supervisor or designate is responsible for ensuring that this information is managed and recorded as required.

Visitors

- All visitors will be complete a Health Screen prior to entering.
- All visitors will wear a mask while indoors.
- All visitors interacting with the children, will also wear proper eye protection while indoors.

Illness

Management:

If a child or staff begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending Nelephant, the following procedures will occur:

- Staff members presenting any COVID-like symptoms will be required to go home immediately.
- Symptomatic children will be immediately separated from others in a designated, supervised area until they can go home. In addition, where possible, anyone who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of 2 meters.
- Staff supervising the child will wear all appropriate PPE as recommended by Public Health. Children over the age of 2 years will be asked to wear a mask.
- Environmental cleaning of all spaces the child was in will be conducted as soon as possible.
- Other children and staff in the cohort who were present while a child or staff member became ill will be identified as a close contact to the Public Health and grouped together. The Public Health will provide any further direction on testing and isolation of these close contacts.
- Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be excluded from the childcare setting under the direction of Public Health.

Reporting:

- Childcare centers within the meaning of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* , have a duty to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. Nelephant will also contact the NPH to report a case of COVID-19. The NPH will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent the potential spread and how to monitor for other possible infected staff members and children.
- Nelephant will respect the confidentiality of any staff member or student who experiences COVID-19 symptoms and/or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Reportable diseases (diseases of public health significance) shall be reported immediately by an administrative staff member by calling the NPH or Telehealth 1-866-797-0000 (24 hours, 7 days a week). The NPH will investigate and confirm these reports prior to any communications to parents or staff.
- We will report cases to Public Health, unless otherwise directed by Public Health at certain times throughout the Pandemic.

Testing:

- Symptomatic staff and children should complete the online self-assessment offered by the Ontario Covid assessment center: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/> and follow their instructions. Please inform Nelephant whether you will be tested or not.
- Testing of asymptomatic persons should only be performed as directed by the local public health unit as part of outbreak management.
- Those who test negative for COVID-19 or who were told not to get tested must be

excluded until 24 hours after symptom resolution or until cleared to return by a health care professional.

- Those who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from Nelephant until clearance has been received from the NPH.
- Staff and children who are identified as close contacts of a positive Covid case, will follow all current Public Health guidelines in terms of isolation requirements.

Communication:

- When a child begins to show signs of COVID-19, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone by the administrative staff.
- Parents are required to provide current phone numbers to Nelephant and keep them updated at all times, as well as all other emergency contact phone numbers necessary. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called. Parents/guardians need to make arrangements to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- Nelephant will follow all direction from the NPH in regard to when and how to communicate information about a communicable disease and/or outbreak to parents/guardians and staff.
- Nelephant is committed to providing information in a reasonable timely, respectful manner to all parents/guardians and staff about communicable diseases or outbreaks. This will include but is not limited to emails, phone calls, posted signs on doors/walls of the school, etc.
- Video and telephone interviews/meetings will be used to interact with families when needed.

Temporary Covid-19 Changes – Highlights

Nelephant will be following the Provincial Guidelines and has implemented an “Immunization Disclosure Policy” which states that all staff, student teachers, and regular visitors provide proof of being fully vaccinated. Those who are not vaccinated, including those with medical exemptions, will be required to complete regular Covid-19 testing as directed in provincial guidance.

- Parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up from outside the building, only entering when necessary.
- **It is strongly recommended that all children over the age of 2 years wear a mask while indoors.**
- Health Screening done online every morning before arriving at school whether your child is attending school or not (unless you have informed the school that your child will be away for a number of days).
- All children showing any signs of illness must stay home for a full 24 hours and follow the guidelines described on the Health Screen form.
- No Before Care. Drop off is between 8:30-9:00am. **(Casa only)**
- Aftercare will run from 4:00-5:00pm at an additional charge. For Casa children, this is only available to those in Casa 2. Please speak with Jodi if you require a space in this program. **(Casa only)**
- All Casa children will bring their own snacks. Everything listed below **MUST BE LABELED** with child’s name. **(Casa only)**
 - 1 morning snack container in child’s school bag.
 - 1 afternoon snack container in child’s school bag. (full-day children only)
 - 1 reusable water bottle each day in child’s school bag. Please fill it at home.
 - Please ensure to include utensils if needed for snacks or lunches.
 - Please choose containers/packages that your child is able to open as independently as possible. Practicing a few times at home is helpful.
- Until further notice, there will be no Parent Observations in the classrooms.
- We will be using the Remind App to send documents/reminders home to limit the need for parents to enter the building.

****Please Note:** If any information included in the “Covid-19 Procedures” contradicts information in the rest of the Handbook, until further notice, we will be following the Covid-19 protocol and procedures. Throughout the year there may be changes made to these procedures as we continue to follow the most current Public Health recommendations. We will update you as required.

1- Program Statement

Nelephant Montessori's Program Statement

This program statement has been created to outline how Nelephant Montessori School, as a C.C.M.A. Accredited Montessori School, meets and exceeds all of the guidelines set out in the Ontario Government's "How Does Learning Happen?" (Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years). Our school does this by following Dr. Montessori's methods and philosophies for each plane of development.

Nelephant Montessori School provides a learning environment that is welcoming, engaging, and fulfills the needs of each child in the plane of development they are in. We view all children as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential and our program is designed to nurture their academic, emotional and social development. Their time at our school will enhance their decision making skills, self-confidence, self-reliance, sense of responsibility, good citizenship and respect for others.

In order to achieve this, we plan and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported by using the international Montessori curriculum and materials that have been proven through research to be effective with children from all socio-economic and cultural groups. Our Directresses/Directors have all been trained and certified through MACTE accredited educational training institutes. In addition, our assistants are Registered Early Childhood Educators or equivalent and our school is a fully accredited member of the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators. Our interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Ministry of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen*". (It is important to note that, while HDLH describes children's activity as 'play', Montessori pedagogy often describes the activities as "work". Nevertheless, the activities, as experienced by a child, are one and the same.)

We foster children's exploration, play and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori learning 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 to assist others with care of the self, care of the environment and grace and courtesy toward others; activities to explore and refine all the senses as well as to 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; activities to allow them to explore the world around them as well as other cultures in the areas of zoology, botany, geography, science and history. 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/or 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. Children are welcome to take any of the activities they have been presented at any time to practice and explore with them. Teachers always try 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.

We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, nutrition breaks 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 or have a break in the library looking at a book. 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. In addition, we have a well-equipped outdoor playground that children access on a regular basis. Our full-day children go outside every day after lunch and our half day children enjoy our special outdoor day on Fridays. Our younger full-day children are offered a nap time after outdoor play, while the older children engage in quiet afternoon activities.

We encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their abilities to self-regulate by having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years. 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 trained adults. This provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves, and with adults.

We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of The Ministry of Education. There is a catered lunch program offered to our full day children and healthy and nutritious snacks are provided by our school and prepared by staff who hold their Food Handler Training Certificates. We talk to the children about healthy eating and staff model it for them as well.

We foster the engagement of an ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children. During the school year, we have two parent teacher conferences where parents and teachers sit down to discuss the child's progress. We plan parent education nights where parents can come and learn more about the Montessori program and other relevant Early Childhood topics. Also, at the parent's request, the staff will gladly set up a time to meet with them whenever there is a need. To give the parents an opportunity to see what their children do while at school, we arrange two "Bring Your Parents to School" evenings as well as provide each family two observation times throughout the year where they can come and observe their child's class for an hour and half. At the end of their three years at our school, we write very detailed report cards for all of our graduating students.

We document in several ways. Records, seasonal newsletters, and photos. We track all lessons given, all work engaged in and observe and communicate anecdotal information on each child and on the class as a whole. We observe and discuss concerns regarding social, emotional, developmental or academic challenges and strive to come up with the best plans to meet each child's needs while they are in our program.

We involve local community partners and encourage their interactions with the children. We have many special guests from the community come in throughout the year to run special interest days for our children. We also welcome specialist from Community Living and Preschool Services as well as Pathstone Mental Health to work with our children when necessary and we meet with the parents and these specialists together to set up appropriate plans and strategies as needed.

As there are many similarities to the Casa Program, these are specific to the Toddler Program. Our toddler environment offer's exploration of the child's expanding world while following the Montessori philosophy. We foster the exploration and inquiry by having a fully equipped learning environment. There are activities that assist the children to become independent. We have activities

that explore and refine all the senses as well as discovering sequencing and order, activities to increase vocabulary, explore sounds and activities that introduce numbers, letters, and colours. Some children depending on their age can spend one or two years in the Toddler Program.

We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff by communicating, promoting, and adhering to our values. We foster children's exploration, encourage interaction and communication by designing an environment that sparks curiosity, promote co-operative play, and provide challenges. We foster ongoing communication to the parent about the program and their child on a regular basis. Parents can access their child's teacher daily by chatting with them during arrival and dismissal.

We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well being of the children by providing healthy meals and snacks in a positive group environment. We provide opportunities for children to practice self help and self care skills based on each child's capabilities. We provide regular daily opportunities for the children to be outdoors which is both safe and stimulating.

Staff record all lessons that are given for each child in our program. We observe and discuss any concerns and come up with a plan that will help the child. Staff are encouraged to seek professional learning workshops that are offered in the evening. The supervisor will assist the staff in identifying learning opportunities.

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. The staff also return to school one week prior to the children, at which time we all review and complete all necessary documentation required by CCEYA. At the beginning of each year, our staff also set goals for themselves in discussion with our Head of School and together plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. We have a Professional Development budget that any staff person can access depending on their particular needs. We have Professional Development days set aside each year. We also meet regularly to discuss ongoing issues or topics of particular interest at our monthly staff meetings and many informal meetings throughout the week.

This program statement will be reviewed with all staff, students and volunteers annually and whenever an amendment is made.

2- Parent Responsibilities

Parent Co-op Responsibilities at Nelephant Montessori

- 1- Pay all tuition fees on time according to the Fee Schedule. The fees will be collected through Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP) at the beginning of each month. Other fees or money for events such as fundraising or social will be done through E-Transfer. This will be done by e-mail to info@nelephant.ca. **Please note:** In the event that we are mandated to close due to a Pandemic we will not charge tuition fees and will follow guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Niagara Region Children Services.
- 2- Attend 2 General Meetings per year. One to be held in the Fall the other in the Spring.
- 3- Actively participate on chosen Parent Committee and or the Board of Directors. A buy out option is available for those who are unable to commit to participating for \$275.00.
- 4- Participate in or support Fundraising and Social events held throughout the year.
- 5- Ensure your child arrives at school **before classes begin at 9:00am**. If your child is going to be **arriving late**, please call the office in advance to inform us as to what time your child will be arriving.
- 6- Inform the office of any absences for any reason (e.g. illness, appointments, etc.) before 9:00am.
- 7- Ensure all personal information (e.g. phone #, e-mail, home address and health i.e. allergies) is current and up to date. If something changes mid-year, it is your responsibility to inform the office immediately.
- 8- Provide a current list of anyone dropping off or picking up your child(ren). Make appropriate changes throughout the year, as necessary. Staff will ask unfamiliar people for identification. A "Release of a Child to a Minor" form must be filled out prior to the school allowing your child to be dismissed to someone who is under the age of 16.
- 9- Any request for cancelation of services, such as catered lunch, extended care, etc., must be done in writing with **30 days notice** to the office.
- 10-Appointments to meet with either the Head of School or other staff can be set up by e-mail or phone.

3- Days and Hours of Operation

Hours of Operation

We offer both half-day and full-day spaces for both Toddler and Casa classes. All children are required to attend five days a week. This provides more consistency for the children and more stability for the class.

Toddler

Half-Day: 8:30 – 11:30 am

Full-Day: 8:30 – 4:00 pm

Casa

Half-Day: 8:30 – 12:15 pm

Full-Day: 8:30 – 4:00 pm

Extended Care

An extended care program is available if needed for a limited number of children. We request that you contact the school at least a day in advance to check the availability as we are required to ensure proper ratios. *****Please note, this only applies to those that have not signed up for Extended Care on a regular basis*****

Before Care: 8:00 – 8:30 am

Aftercare: 4:00 – 5:00 pm

****If you arrive after 5pm, there is a \$10.00 late fee charge for the first 15 minutes and will increase to \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. This charge will be added to your Aftercare invoice for the month. ****

Ages of Children

Nelephant's Toddler Class accommodates 10 full-day and 5 half-day children ages 18 months to 3-years.

Nelephant's Casa Classes accommodate a total of 48 preschoolers between the ages of 2.8 and 6-years. All Casa children must be fully toilet-trained before starting school.

Yearly School Closures

These are the holidays for which Nelephant Montessori School is closed every year. Exact dates of these holidays will be provided to you during the first week of school in September.

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Monday

Christmas Holidays (2 weeks – including Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Years Day)

Family Day

March Break (1 week)

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Victoria Day

Nelephant Montessori School places a high value on continuous staff development, therefore there will also be a few Professional Development Days throughout the year so staff can attend conferences, among other things. These dates will be provided to you at the beginning of each school year.

Unplanned School Closures

At times, due to inclement weather Nelephant may have to close the school. When this happens prior to students arriving for the day, Nelephant will advertise on the following local radio station: **MOVE 105.7/610 CKTB Storm Desk**. There will be a closure message posted on the Nelephant Facebook page and a change to our voicemail on the school phone to state that the school is closed for the day. We will also send a message through the Remind App. It will be the responsibility of the family, if unsure to check one of those places before leaving in the morning. The school will make every effort to have this information out by 7:00 a.m.

Note: Nelephant will automatically close if the 2 local schoolboards-DSBN and the Catholic board have **closed their schools**.

During a pandemic, such as COVID, our school may remain operational due to the mandate under CCEYA while the public schools may be closed. Under these conditions, the decision to close will take into consideration the weather and road conditions.

If there is a need to close the school at some point during the day due to inclement weather, or unforeseen circumstances, the school will contact the parents with the details. Enough staff will stay until the last child is picked up.

Everyone's health and safety will be the priority for such closures.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Children must be accompanied by an adult to and from the door of their classroom or utilize the 'Kiss & Ride' option. On arrival, notify a member of the staff as to your child's presence. Similarly notify a staff member if you are leaving with your child. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the registration form.

Due to space restrictions, there can only be one-way traffic allowed on the property. Entrance will be on the right-hand side of the building as you face it, and exit will be on the left, or overhang side (Casa only).

Arrivals (Casa and Toddler)

To try to reduce congestion, and make arrival at school as safe and smooth for the children as possible, we ask for your cooperation and patience and provide the following options:

Kiss and Ride (Casa only)

8:30 to 8:45

Drive around building to overhang area. Turn off car for safety and to eliminate car fumes. The parent will take the child out of the car, kiss good-bye, give him/her the school bag, and pass the child to the teacher who will escort the child into the building to another staff member to take to the classroom teacher. The parent then leaves the school property. We expect that this entire process will take no longer than 2 minutes. In order to keep things moving the following restrictions will be enforced:

- **The car engine must be turned off during the entire process and not restarted** until the adult receives the okay from staff to proceed.
- Staff will supervise the child into the building and relay messages and/ or transport items into the school. If the child is having difficulty leaving the parent or creating a fuss for any reason, the parents will be asked to drive around, park, and escort their child into the building themselves.
- Parents cannot leave their car in 'Kiss & Drive' area for any reason other than to take their child out of the car.
- Parents cannot start the car and leave the area until staff has given the all clear signal.

If the staff is not at the door, then the 'window of opportunity' has expired!

Parking (Casa Only)

Parents are requested to park in the school parking lot, on local streets, or in the DSBN Academy School parking lot and use the walkway to get to the school.

Diagonal parking ONLY is allowed on the property. Escort your child (ren) and enter through main doors of school (under overhang). When exiting, exit to right of 'Kiss & Drive' area of overhang.

Please adhere to speed limit of 10 km/hr. at all times and be alert for children!

SAFETY is a priority as other cars will be entering and exiting the property at the same time, so please hold your child's hand at all times!

Dismissals (Casa and Toddler)

Please park and enter building to pick up your child. This will be a good time to check mail, bulletin board etc. As parking is limited, it is imperative that arrivals and dismissals be made as promptly as possible to make room for other cars. Thank you!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, UNDERSTANDING AND
COOPERATION IN THIS IMPORTANT MATTER OF SAFETY FOR OUR CHILDREN**

4- Helpful Hints

School Preparedness

Your Children Will Be Better Prepared for School If You:

- Encourage them to speak clearly and thoughtfully while making eye contact.
- Help them to listen when spoken to.
- Encourage them to carry out simple instructions and to respect authority.
- Allow enough time for them to learn to put on and take off their own outer clothing themselves.
- Remember that independence is important to them.
- Try to provide them with opportunities to play with other children of their own age.
- Listen to and enjoy their school experiences, but don't 'grill' them for information. They tend to withhold more when this happens.
- ABOVE ALL: Help them to achieve a sense of individual accomplishment and a positive image of themselves as people.

See That Your Child's Clothing Is:

- Simple, comfortable, and washable.
- Labeled with his/her initials.
- Easily hung on a hook (i.e. coats with hoods or loops in them tend to be easiest).
- Large enough for them to put on and take off easily. Especially boots. Tights and leotards are not advised, as they are too difficult for toileting.
- Appropriate for the season.**Running shoes are the best choice for outdoor play**
- Safe: Scarves, necklaces and dangling drawstrings can be dangerous.

Provide Good Experiences By:

- Frequently reading stories aloud.
- Taking family trips; airport, library, grocery store.
- Giving them a chance to express themselves.
- Answering their many questions.

When You Bring Your Children to School:

- Bring them to the door of their classroom, say goodbye and leave as you normally would. Please do not linger in the hallway, as this makes it confusing for the child and they can become upset. There they will be greeted by one of the teachers and directed to their tasks for the day.
- Discourage them from bringing favorite objects with them (i.e. toys and blankets are not allowed at school except at nap time).
- ABOVE ALL: Come with a positive and happy attitude. A relaxed and calm parent makes for a peaceful child! If you seem worried, they think there is something to worry about! This experience will be wonderful for them!

Generally Speaking:

- Protect your child from interruptions when they are working and focused.
- Teach your child with real equipment and materials rather than toys.
- Plan each step of a new activity when showing how to do something and slow down your movements.
- Do not do for your child what they can do for themselves. Ever! Once you see them do it-you have to allow them to continue on their own.
- Arrange your home in such a way that your child can manage easily.
- Give sufficient time for your child to perform a task. Allow for some choice.

Helpful Hints - Toddler

1. Prepare your child for what he/she will experience at school. Explain to them daily what will happen.
2. Please verbally guide your child to take off any outer wear and hang up their belongings on their hook. Say good-bye to your child and let them know you will be back; it is best to leave immediately. This will help to make your child's transition smoother and easier for everyone. A teacher will be available to assist you.
3. Please remember to check the white board in the front entrance, and your child's basket regularly for important information.
4. A school bag for shoes, extra clothes, will be supplied. Please send to school daily.
5. Winter can be a challenge for the children and teachers unless the following guidelines are observed:
 - Put your child's name on all outer and loose clothing.
 - Take the time to teach your child how to get in and out of his/her outer clothing. Let him/her do as much as possible on their own with ample time for the task. It may take a little longer, but it is worth it to both you and your child.
 - Attach mittens to coat with clips or short strings.
6. Two nutritious snacks are served every day. Drinks and food will be provided by the school and will follow Nelephant's nut free food policy. Please note: The toddlers in our care **do not use bottles**, so we would ask that you do not send one with your child. We ask that if your child requires a soother while napping, it is placed in their basket upon arrival and it will be given to your child as they go to their cot for nap time.

Check your school calendar for all holidays, Professional Activity Days and school closures.

Helpful Hints - Casa

1. Please verbally guide your child (ren) to take off any outer wear and hang up their belongings on their hook. This applies to our 4 and 5-year-old Full Day children only. Our 3-year-olds will hang their belongings up on their hooks in the classroom. Say goodbye to your child in the hallway. Once your child is ready to enter the classroom, they will be asked to wait outside the classroom door until a teacher is available to greet them.
2. Please remember to check the hall bulletin board, white boards and your school mailbox regularly for important information. Also, there may be times when we will send an e-mail with information from either the school or board.
3. A school bag for shoes, extra cloths, a cup and artwork will be supplied to each child. Please send it to school daily.
4. Classroom observation is one day per week. If you wish to see your child in the classroom setting, please sign the list on the bulletin board. Limit is one family per session. Two adults may attend. Observations take place after Thanksgiving until the end of May.
5. Winter can be a challenge for the children and teachers unless the following guidelines are observed:
 - Put your child's name on all outer and loose clothing.
 - Attach mittens to coat with strings or clips.
 - Take the time to teach your child how to get in and out of his/her outer clothing. Let them do as much as possible with ample time for the task. It may take a little longer but it's worth it to both you and your child.
6. **Birthdays:** At Nelephant the children's birthday celebrations are augmented by having a special circle time in their honor. These circles involve the birthday child holding the globe and walking around a representation of the sun once for every year of their life. As they walk, the teacher describes the child's life as each year passes. Montessori believed it was important for the children to have a concrete example of the passage of time, and their growth and development.

Parents can help by sending in a picture of your child for each year of their life starting from birth. The pictures will be returned to you and may come to school anytime the week prior to your child's birthday. Any significant events or memories can also be written down and given to your child's teacher to enrich this experience.
7. Two nutritious snacks are served every day. Drinks and food will be provided by the school and will follow the Nelephant's nut free food policy. Each child is requested to bring a small cup daily. This cup will be sent home daily for washing.
8. **Check your school calendar for all holidays, Professional Activity Days and school closures.**

5- Health and Safety

Nutrition and Medications

Nutrition

A nutritious morning and afternoon nut free snack will be provided by the school.

All Casa children are required to bring a small cup, labeled with their name, for a drink. This cup will be sent home at the end of the week for washing. Please **NO** sippy cups or cups with lids! During the warmer weather, a water bottle with a lid, clearly labelled with the child's name on it will be used for outdoor times only. We would appreciate it if it were filled upon arrival and placed on your child's hook.

Please note: We cannot accept any food/drink items to share with the children due to allergies

Health and Administration of Medication

The Child Care and Early Years Act stipulates that prior to admission, each child must be immunized as recommended by the local medical officer of health and show proof thereof. Nelephant also requires a medical form be submitted at this time. If a child becomes ill during the day, temporary care will be provided until a parent is contacted and the child can be taken home.

If your child requires medication to be given while at school, an Administration of Medication form must be completed and signed by the parents in advance. Nelephant can only administer medication to your child under the following guidelines:

- 1- Must be prescribed by a doctor.
- 2- Must have a pharmacy label and be in the original package.
- 3- Must be clearly labeled with your child's name.
- 4- Label must include date of purchase and expiration date.

Clothing and Possessions

Your child is best dressed in clothing appropriate for physical activity, messy play, the weather, and the current season. All clothing, particularly loose outer clothing, must be labeled with your child's full name.

****Please note that if your child's belongings are not clearly labelled, staff will label with a permanent marker, as this is a Ministry mandate. If you are looking for a great quality label, we recommend Mable's Labels (www.mabelslabels.com) – please find Nelephant Montessori in their fundraising section to help support our school.)**

When to Keep My Child at Home?

If you are not sure when to send your children to school or keep them home, here is a list of things to be mindful of.

****Your child MUST stay home for 24 hours after their first dose of medication given to allow time for it to take affect and to reduce the risk of reinfection. If your child requires medication once they return to school, please see the office for the appropriate forms to fill out.****

Your child should stay home if:

- he/she had any **VOMITING or DIARRHEA**. They may not return to school until **24 hours** after the last incident and **48 hours** in an “Outbreak Situation”.
- ANY FEVER (i.e. temperature above 37.0° C, or 98.6° F) - indicates active infection.
- EARACHE or any drainage from ear.
- EYE IRRITATIONS - with yellow discharge or redness – have a doctor examine it to rule out pink eye which is contagious.
- NOSE – continuously runny nose and/or thick/coloured mucus.
- UNTREATED HEAD LICE OR SIGNS OF NITS IN THE HAIR – Our school has a “no nit” policy. Treatment is required prior to reentry.
- RASHES – that are of an unknown nature.
- STOMACH ACHES/ HEADACHES - keep your child home for observation.
- SORE THROAT- usually can spread infection.
- COUGH – If it prevents the child from having a restful sleep.
- TOOTHACHES - child should be seen by a dentist.

Please make sure we have the most up-to-date phone numbers at home and at work, in case of sickness during the day and need to notify you.

If your child is going to be absent for whatever reason, a phone call is required each day or period of time they are away. If your child has a communicable disease or prolonged illness, we do require this information for the Public Health.

Quality Child Care Niagara Screening

Nelephant Montessori School is part of Quality Child Care Niagara.

Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) is a standardized training approach designed to improve the quality of programs offered to each child enrolled in our childcare program. This approach provides our Early Childhood Educators a framework within which programming decisions can be made. It promotes early identification supporting timely referrals to the right community resources.

As part of QCCN we use the following checklists

Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS):

Diagnostic Inventory for Screening Children, Preschool Screen (DPS)

- Early developmental screening tool designed to screen large groups of children between the ages of 6 – 60 months
- Reliable in identifying children who may be at risk of developmental delay
- Sets the stage for a smooth transition to the formal school system

Environmental Rating Scales:

- Variety of environmental rating scales, geared to childcare environments and children's age groups designed to enhance the quality of developmental programming

Behaviour Checklist: Children's Actions, Relationships, & Emotions (C.A.R.E.)

- An intervention planning tool that identifies behaviour patterns in children ages 24 – 72 months
- Complements the Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS)
- Provides a format for recording of observations and sharing information with families

Speech & Language Developmental Checklist

- Checklist that examines all elements of speech and language development for children birth to five years
- Identifies children who may be at risk for speech and/or language delay or disorder
- Complements the Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS)
- Provides a user-friendly format for recording of observations, obtaining a baseline record of skills and sharing the information with families

Record-keeping (Documentation)

- Clear record-keeping ensures that Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS) Environmental Rating Scales, Speech/Language and Behaviour Checklist scores are recorded in a standardized way to support program planning for all children
- Surveys are distributed once a year to obtain standardized feedback from parents/guardians
- Written permission is required from the parent/guardian before using any checklist.

6- Policies

Admissions and Discharge Policy

The following are eligible for admission to the Toddler class, subject to approval by the school administration:

Children ages 18 months to 3 years whose parents wish to enroll them in the program, pay the required fees as stated in the current year's Fee Schedule, and abide by the school's policies and procedures.

The following are eligible for admission to the Casa program, subject to meeting the school's policy:

Children ages 2 years 6 months to 5 years **who are toilet-trained** and whose parents wish to enroll them in the program, pay the required fees as stated in the current year's Fee Schedule, and abide by the school's policies and procedures. February 1st is the last day for admission in that school year. No children under the age of 3 years will be enrolled after January 1st of the current school year.

Admissions shall be accepted in the following order:

1. Children currently enrolled at Nelephant (Casa or Toddler) and wishing to re-enroll for the following year.
2. Siblings of children currently enrolled at Nelephant (Casa or Toddler), whose names have been placed on the wait list.
3. Children whose parents have requested enrollment on a first come basis as of date of contact.

After initial notification to parents of available space for their child (ren), parents will have five (5) days to fulfill enrolment requirements in order to ensure that position. If time expires, and enrolment requirements have not been met, then the next family on the admissions waiting list will be notified for the same opening(s).

Admission Procedures

1. Parents/Guardians have, if possible, observed in a Montessori class, and have discussed philosophy with the school staff.
2. Have registration fee paid.
3. Have completed all required application, consent and medical forms, including proof of immunization.
4. Have annual fees paid according to the current year's Fee Schedule.
5. **Please note: First and Last month's tuition are due prior to your child starting school (regardless of start date) and this is non-refundable.**

Accommodation for Children

Nelephant Montessori School is committed to creating a school that is inclusive and barrier-free to ensure the full participation of all children. Nelephant Montessori aims to foster an environment that encourages and supports accommodation requests by working with parents/guardians on strategies to accommodate the needs of their child(ren).

In working towards this goal, the school will strive to provide support for and facilitate parent/guardian requests for accommodation consistent with the protected grounds outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Child Care and Early Years Act and AODA. The school will, where it is possible and reasonable to do so and does not cause undue hardship, alter existing practices, adopt new policies or practices, adjust the program or school once the parent/guardian has provided the appropriate documentation supporting the request for accommodation.

Purchase of Service Clients

Nelephant recognizes a commitment to serving all children within the Niagara Region. Any child referred to Nelephant whose families are Purchase of Service clients will be admitted based on the school's budget for the year. The quota will be determined yearly. Please note that the Region will only subsidize Purchase of Service clients for the first year in the Casa class. As we require a 3-year commitment, the Purchase of Service client will be responsible for the Tuition, in full, beyond their child's first year.

Sleep and Rest Periods Policy

All children in attendance of the full-day program will be offered a nap/rest period of up to a maximum of two (2) hours. The need for rest and sleep varies greatly at different ages and for different children. This period allows for a period during which quiet activities are encouraged and children can nap if required.

Each child requiring a nap will be assigned their own cot labelled with their name. Cots and a sheet are provided by the school, but children are welcome to bring a blanket and or a small comfort item for sleep time.

Sleep/rest periods are scheduled for children attending the school for six hours or more. Depending on the age and/or sleep needs of the child the time varies from one to two hours.

Nelephant Montessori School is required to ensure that sleep room staff perform a direct visual check of each sleeping child once every 30 minutes. A direct visual check requires a staff to go over to the sleeping child and look for indicators of distress or unusual behaviour.

Staff will communicate with parents periodically throughout the year to re-assess the children's needs to nap.

Please note, our policy is that all toddlers and first year aged Casa children will go down for a rest for a minimum of 1 hour.

Outdoor Program

Nelephant Montessori School believes that outdoor play is an extension of the learning and development of the indoor classroom.

Based on the requirements of the Child Care and Early Years Act, our program offers children over thirty months of age, that are in attendance for six hours or more in a day, the opportunity to play outdoors for at least two hours each day, weather permitting, unless a physician advises otherwise in writing.

Full-Day Program

Two hours of outdoor play time is available for full-day students each day, weather permitting.

Half-Day Program

Outdoor play time is available daily for half-day students while waiting to be picked up, weather permitting.

Toddler Program

Two hours of outdoor play time is available for all full-day children each day, weather permitting. Half day children will go out for a period each morning, weather permitting.

Excursions, Outings and Special Visitors

Nelephant Montessori School will at times go on excursions that are within walking distance of the school, under direct supervision of the teachers. Parents will sign the general Outdoor Excursions Form (included in the registration package) one time, prior to their child starting school. This permission form will be valid for the entire school year.

On occasion, we will plan special outings for our 4 and 5-year-old full-day Casa children. These events will be planned by the Academic Supervisor and staff to ensure they are developmentally appropriate. Individual permission forms will be handed out to all parents well in advance and collected prior to children being allowed to participate in the outing. If we do not receive the signed form, the child will not be permitted to participate. Parents will be made aware of the following details for each outing, including, but not limited to, the time of departure, time of arrival back at school, destination, mode of transportation, costs.

On all excursions and outings, the children will be under direct supervision of staff at all times. They will carry all emergency contacts for each child along with all required supplies necessary when leaving the school property. The staff to child ratio will be maintained at all times.

The teachers will also plan to have a variety of special guests come to our school throughout the year. These visitors will be an enhancement to the curriculum that they have developed for the year.

Bagged Lunch Policy

If your child is bringing a bagged lunch to school, please review this policy and ensure that you are always complying.

- All containers including the lids, bags, juice containers etc. **must always be labelled with your child's name.**
- Lunches must be ***nut free*** – any uncertainties will be returned home in the lunch bag with a note from staff. Please ensure that lunches/snacks are healthy options and avoid snack type foods such as chips and cookies.
- No refrigeration or warming of food is provided by the school.
- Lunches are stored on the shelves below the coats in the hallway or on your child's hook in the classroom.
- Should a child forget to bring a lunch then the parents will be contacted prior to lunch time. In unusual situations a substitute lunch may be provided by the school if possible.
- Due to health reasons children are prevented from sharing any food with others.
- We strive to return any uneaten food so you can monitor the quantity of food your child is eating.

Emergency Management

Promoting a healthy and safe environment for the well being of the children in our care is in keeping to our school's mission statement. We do this by diligently meeting all the requirements of the Ministry of Education, Niagara's office of Public Health and the Fire Department. At Nelephant we do practice Fire Drills along with a check of all fire exits, emergency lighting, extinguishers and the "Panic Button" (connected directly to the alarm company) each month. We conduct a yearly Lock Down drill and have a designated Emergency Shelter off site.

In the case of an evacuation, parents will be notified by Nelephant Montessori School by either phone or e-mail as to where the emergency shelter is located and procedures on how to pick up their children. In the case of other types of emergencies, such as prolonged power outages, water shut off, etc., parents will be contacted and asked to pick their child up at the school. Staff will remain with children until all children have been picked up.

Once a year the school has a formal inspection for our Security System as well as all fire extinguishers. The staff are all trained in Standard First Aid and CPR which includes infants, children, and adults.

Annually, all emergency policies and procedures are reviewed and signed off on by all staff, students, and volunteers.

Anaphylaxis Policy

Purpose:

To reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents of individuals regularly in the School. This procedure aligns with Sabrina's Law, 2005 legislation.

Intent:

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction and can be life threatening. This policy is to help support the needs of a child with a severe allergy and provide some information on anaphylaxis and awareness to parents, staff, students, and volunteers at the School.

Policy:

As a communication plan for providing information on life threatening allergies, including anaphylactic allergies an Information Sheet will be put in the child's file and posted in each classroom, the food prep area, dining areas and outdoor binder.

Procedure:

1. An individual plan will be developed with input from the child's parent or guardian and the child's physician, for each child. The Information Sheet will be used to capture all relevant information including description of the child's allergy, signs and symptoms of a reaction and emergency procedures in the event of exposure to allergens Any medications to be administered must be prescribed by a doctor and be current. Form(s) must be completed in detail with specific instructions before the child is permitted to attend school. Along with the forms a valid Epi-pen must always be arranged to be kept on site . **The Epi-pen must have the pharmacy label on it and not just the box it comes in!**
2. The parent will sign to show they consent to the method by which staff are trained to administer emergency medication and identify how that training was provided, e.g., the parent, a doctor, a nurse, through Red Cross Emergency training etc.
3. All participants in the program – staff, students, volunteers – will review the individual plan for each child before they begin employment/ participation/placement and annually thereafter.
4. This individual plan will be reviewed by the parents at least every six months to ensure it remains current with revisions done immediately as needed. Changes in emergency contact information, medication or emergency protocol will be considered. It will be the parents/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of any changes as they occur.
5. **Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure:**
 1. Nelephant is a **NUT FREE** environment. For children's birthdays, we ask that families refrain from bringing in any food items to be served to the children.
 2. For other known allergies that are severe enough to be air-born allergens, we will communicate with all Nelephant families that we are no longer going to permit that allergen to enter the building. We will do regular lunch/snack checks to ensure compliance.
 3. Disinfecting of the table will be done before and after a child with a severe allergy has snack and or lunch.

4. The child's snack will be kept up on the "teacher counter", rather than on the snack shelf with the other children's snack.
5. Children with severe allergies will have an assigned seat at the lunch table and the other children sitting at that table will have their lunches inspected daily to make sure that they are allergen free.
6. All kitchen staff will take extra precaution when preparing and serving food to ensure that there is no cross-contamination.
7. Staff will ensure that proper handwashing is done by the children as well as themselves, supply staff, students, and volunteers.

If a child is bringing a bagged lunch to school:

- All containers including the lids, bags, juice containers etc. **must always be labelled with your child's name.**
- Lunches must be ***nut free*** – any uncertainties will be returned home in the lunch bag with a note from staff. Please ensure that lunches/snacks are healthy options and avoid snack type foods such as chips and cookies.
- No refrigeration or warming of food is provided by the school.
- Should a child forget to bring a lunch then the parents will be contacted prior to lunch time. In unusual situations a substitute lunch may be provided by the school if possible.
- Due to health reasons children are prevented from sharing any food with others.
- We strive to return any uneaten food so you can monitor the quantity of food your child is eating.

Training –Individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan

Annual training in the use of the epi-pens will be provided by the professionals in conjunction with the required First Aid/CPR training as required. In addition, the parent will be asked to give specific instructions on the use of the epi-pen during the review of the anaphylactic plan for their child. Individual Anaphylaxis Plans will be reviewed and updated annually. A Public Health Nurse will be invited to a staff meeting to provide a demonstration as required. Epi-pens for training purposes are available to staff who wish to review the procedure at any time.

Training- Individual Medical Condition Management Plan

The parent of a child with a medical condition such as diabetes must complete an "Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs" form. Any required training for staff must be provided by the parent or a health care professional. The Plan will be reviewed at least every 6 months with the parent and immediately updated as required. All staff, students and volunteers must read and sign off on their understanding of the Plan as written. When changes are made to the Plan staff, students and volunteers will be required to read the revised Plan and sign off on the Plan. If no changes are required, the Plan will be reviewed annually.

New Employees, Students and Volunteers

All new employees, students and or volunteers will be required to review the current allergy list in addition to all Medical Management Plans and Individualized Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan prior to commencing employment, placement or volunteering and sign off indicating that they have done so.

Annual Review

All employees, students and volunteers will annually review all Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans and Medical Management Plans and sign off that they are fully aware of the allergy or medical condition and the action to be taken if it should become necessary.

Supervision Policy for Students and Volunteers

Nelephant Montessori School does not permit direct unsupervised access to the children for any persons not employed by the school, i.e. students and volunteers. Students and Volunteers will always be supervised by a qualified staff member.

The Head of School requires all students and volunteers to sign a confidentiality form and review all applicable school policies prior to their involvement at the school.

The Head of School and/or the Academic Supervisor/Toddler Supervisor will guide the student/volunteer through an orientation session to ensure there is a clear understanding about the operation of the school and what the expectations are for the placement or volunteer experience.

Before commencing any student and volunteer placements, the Head of School will ensure that proof of immunizations and a health assessment stating that they are free from communicable disease is obtained. If the individual does not get immunized, a "Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief for Individual" (CCEYA, 2014) will be obtained.

As well, a valid Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) is required for all students/volunteers having direct contact with the children. Every year after the VSC has been completed, the students/volunteers will be required to sign an Offense Declaration form to be kept on file at the school.

Student and Volunteer Expectations/Responsibilities

Students will be mentored by the Directress and or the RECE Assistants to complete their post-secondary expectations that are outlined in their placement evaluation forms. All evaluation forms, planning and reflections for the student will be kept on site in a binder that is clearly labelled with the student's name. Their evaluation will be completed by the Directress or RECE Assistants at the completion of their placement block. The Head of School will review the evaluation forms prior to it being given to the student. The student will be expected to wear a badge that identifies them as a student in training and a profile sheet introducing the student will be placed on the Parent Communication Board located in the front foyer- toddler site or on the white board between the Casa classes.

Volunteers will be guided under the supervision of the classroom teacher(s) to do any of the following, but not limited to, reading books with the children, assisting with routines such as coatroom, material preparation for the classroom, and outdoor activities.

Program Statement Implementation Policy

The following policy has been developed in order to demonstrate how our Program Statement is brought to life at Nelephant Montessori School on a daily basis. The children, parents/guardians and educators are all partners in the children's learning. Children are viewed as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses. Learning evolves from natural curiosity. Our goal is to foster a strong self-image within each child. The children develop skills in choice-making, problem solving and socialization. We are dedicated to the concept of learning through play. The techniques of child guidance used, and the design of the environment support this objective.

Expectations for Implementation

Our Program Statement has been developed in such a way that reflects not only key elements outlined in section 46 of the Child Care and Early Years Act but also the Four Foundations introduced in the document How Does Learning Happen and the Montessori Philosophy. It is the expectation that all staff, students and volunteers are familiar with and utilize this living document.

The Head of School in conjunction with the Academic or Toddler Supervisor

- Complete an orientation for each new staff, student, and volunteer before they begin.
- Conduct an annual policy review that includes a reflection of the Program Statement and Program Statement Implementation Policy. This is recorded on a Policy Review Sign-off Record Sheet and kept in "The Policy Binder" and the previous years' will be kept in staff files.
- Collects ongoing feedback regarding the Program Statement that in conjunction with annual reflection is used to review and update the statement.
- Practices of employees, students, volunteers, and supply staff with regards to the Program Statement and its implementation are monitored on an ongoing basis as part of the responsibility for program observation and evaluation.
- Adherence to the statement and policy are noted specifically and any non-compliance is recorded and dealt with according to policy.
- Complete the Compliance Management Observation monitoring forms for each employee on a semi-annual basis and annually for volunteers and students during their placement block. The results will be reviewed with the individual and kept on file for licensing purposes.
- Ensure an annual program evaluation is completed and reviewed with the staff as outlined by the Quality Child Care Niagara requirements.
- Provide feedback to staff during annual performance appraisals and goal review sessions.
- Provide guidance to staff and volunteers regarding the Program Statement and its implementation. As part of this guidance work together to determine measurable goals and how they will be achieved. It may involve workshops, reading articles or books, or visiting with another group who is excelling in this area. Meetings to discuss progress will be arranged.
- Provide an orientation to the school for each family during which pedagogical documentation is discussed.
- Explain open door policy, parent/guardian participation and open communication to parents/guardians during orientation.
- Responsible for updating the Program Statement and Implementation Policy as needed.
- Design and distribute an annual parent survey. Discuss results with staff.
- Make changes to policies as necessary based on feedback both formal and informal from the Ministry of Education, parents/guardians and staff.

Staff, Students and Volunteers

- Attend initial orientation session to receive training on the Program Statement and policies of the organization.
- Become aware of and able to articulate how each goal in the Program Statement is implemented in the program.
- Provide ongoing feedback regarding the Program Statement and its implementation that includes attendance at an annual meeting for reflection on the statement.
- Communicate daily with parents/guardians regarding their children's daily activities.
- Encourage parents/guardians to participate in their child's school by serving on the Parent Committees and by attending various school events throughout the year.
- Montessori Directresses/Directors will complete ongoing pedagogical documentation and discuss with parents regularly.
- Take part in an annual performance appraisal. In discussion with the Head of School and or Academic Supervisor(Casa Site)/Toddler Supervisor(Toddler Site) develop measurable goals.
- Use the Compliance Management Observation form as a reflection tool in discussions with the Head of School and or Academic Supervisor(Casa Site) /Toddler Supervisor(Toddler Site) .

Non-Compliance

Staff discipline for non-compliance will be carried out according to The Procedures for Monitoring Compliance and Contraventions as well as outline in the Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy. Non-compliance with the Program Statement and Program Statement Implementation Policy will result in initiating the progressive warning and disciplinary steps.

Under section 48 of the Child Care and Early Years Act the following are prohibited practices and are grounds for dismissal:

- 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 school 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.

The review of individualized support plans for children forms its own policy. Plans are reviewed with all those involved with the child including the parents/guardians, Head of School, staff and supporting agency staff. Plans are developed by this team and reviewed and updated at regularly scheduled meetings. Any staff new to the team are oriented by the existing team. Plans are then explained to the rest of the staff.

Anaphylaxis and medical support plans also form their own policies. These individual plans are reviewed each year with the family, staff, students and volunteers. A Sign-off Record Sheet is completed.

Monitoring

Practices of staff, students and volunteers with regards to the program statement and its implementation and use of policies and procedures are monitored on an ongoing basis as part of the Head of School's responsibility for program observation and evaluation. Concerns and issues are dealt with as they arise. This is also a time to mentor and guide staff, students and volunteers.

The Head of School, Academic Supervisor and or Toddler Supervisor will complete the Compliance Management Observation Forms for each staff on a semi-annual basis and annually for volunteers and while students are doing their placement block. Staff providing care or guidance to the children will receive feedback from the Head of School at regularly scheduled performance evaluation (i.e. annually for employees). The results will be reviewed with the individual and kept on file for licensing purposes. In addition, an annual program evaluation is completed. This evaluation contains a component of interactions with others.

The Academic Supervisor will be monitored by the Head of School semi-annually. The documentation will be reviewed with the individual and a signed copy will be kept on site at the school for licensing purposes.

Professional Development

Professional development is essential for keeping educators current in their information and aware of the latest developments related to their field. It not only provides updates but also offers an opportunity to network. Supervisors and staff set goals together that are measurable and take into consideration both new areas of development and building on existing skills. Please refer to the Staff Training and Development Policy for further detail.

Standards for Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Staff communicate daily with parents/guardians regarding their children's day.
- Pedagogical documentation is discussed with parents/guardians informally on a regular basis and more formally during the two scheduled parent/teacher interviews or at parents' request.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in their child's school by serving on the Parent Committees and by attending various school events throughout the year.
- Casa Parents are encouraged to sign up for a semi-annual observation time in their child's class.
- Parents are encouraged to come for our semi-annual Bring Your Parents to School evenings where their child brings them into the classroom and shows them everything they have been working on and their favourite activities.
- Feedback about the program is encouraged informally on a daily basis from parents/guardians.
- When concerns are brought to staff members, they are empowered to find solutions. However, if needed, they will go to the Head of School or the Academic Supervisor/Toddler Supervisor to determine the best course of action.
- Once a year a formal survey is available for parents/guardians to complete.

- Parent/guardian surveys are reviewed and discussed by the Head of School and the staff. Suggestions for change are discussed and acted upon as appropriate.
- Annually, all staff are given an opportunity to review, reflect and provide input into updating the program statement and its implementation.

Prohibited Practices

Nelephant Montessori School does not permit the following by any employee, student, volunteer, or any other adult at the school:

- 1- Corporal punishment of a child.
- 2- Physical restraint of a 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.
- 3- Locking the exits of the school premises for the purpose of confining a child unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the school's emergency management policies and procedures.
- 4- 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.
- 5- Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding.
- 6- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Discipline

Children are disciplined in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their actions and ages in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety, respect the rights of others, and maintain equipment. Spanking and any other forms of corporal punishment are not permitted. Methods of discipline are discussed among staff and with parents if necessary and consistent disciplinary steps are agreed upon.

Wait List Policy

Policy: Nelephant Montessori School will not charge parents a fee or a deposit for the placement of their child (ren) on a wait list for an unsecured spot.

Procedure: Families that would like to be waitlisted for a space at Nelephant Montessori School will:

1. Notify the school of their intentions
2. Arrange to attend an open house and or have a school tour to discuss the philosophy.
3. Provide information about their family on the Waitlist Information Form, after their tour
4. Child (ren) will be placed on the waitlist
5. No fee or deposit will be charged
6. The Academic Supervisor or designate will contact the family when a space becomes available in either the Casa or Toddler class
7. Families will be offered admission from the waitlist based on the criteria outlined in the Nelephant Admissions policy
8. Information will only be accessed by the Head of School, Academic Supervisor, Toddler Supervisor and Office Administrator to ensure confidentiality
9. A child's (ren's) position on the waitlist will be verbally communicated at a parent's request through the office.

Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and the procedures within is to provide clear instructions for staff, students and volunteers to follow for how to identify, respond to and report a serious occurrence. It ensures that there is a plan to deal with any serious incidents that may affect the health, safety and well-being of children and those working directly with children, and that these serious incidents are addressed by Nelephant Montessori School and reported to the Ministry of Education for review.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures with respect to serious occurrences for school.

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

Policy

Identifying a Serious Occurrence

Under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, serious occurrences are defined as: the death of a child who received care & education at the school, abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving care & education at the school, a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness such as COVID-19 of a child who receives care & education at the school, an incident where a child who is receiving care & education at the school goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a care & education at the school that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving care & education at the school.

Reporting a Serious Occurrence

Staff will notify the Head of School, supervisor or designate of a serious occurrence as soon as they become aware of the incident.

All serious occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education in the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) within 24 hours of the Head of School, supervisor or designate becoming aware of the occurrence.

Identifying information such as children or staff names will not be included in the serious occurrence reports.

If CCLS cannot be accessed (e.g. where CCLS or an internet connection is unavailable), the Head of School, supervisor or designate will notify the program advisor (PA) assigned to the licence by email or by telephone within 24 hours of becoming aware of the occurrence. A serious occurrence report will be submitted in CCLS as soon as the system can be accessed.

Where a Ministry of Education PA cannot be reached by telephone, a voicemail message will be left to notify the PA of the incident.

All updates to serious occurrences will be reported in CCLS through update reports until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education.

Where the Ministry of Education requests updates to a serious occurrence in CCLS, these will be provided as soon as possible through update reports.

Serious occurrences reported to the Ministry of Education will be documented in the daily written record.

Posting a Serious Occurrence Summary (Notification Form)

Within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious occurrence, the Head of School, supervisor or designate will complete a Serious Occurrence Notification Form in either CCLS or using the form available in Appendix A.

The form will provide a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by the school.

The summary will not include identifying information (e.g. names and ages of children, staff, or program rooms) and will contain gender-neutral language.

The summary will be posted at the school in a place that is visible and accessible to parents for a minimum of 10 business days, regardless of the serious occurrence type and the status of any related investigation.

All serious occurrence summaries will be retained for 3 years from the date they are created or last updated (whichever date is most recent).

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

If any person, including a person who performs professional duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered, or is at risk to suffer, physical or emotional harm or sexual exploitation or molestation inflicted by the person having charge of the child, the person will report the suspicion directly to a children's aid society (CAS).

Suspected abuse or neglect that will be reported will include physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect.

Where a parent expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact their local CAS directly. The person who becomes aware of these concerns is also required to report the concerns to the local CAS.

Family and Children's Services (FACS) 905-937-7731 ask for INTAKE.

The Early Educator's Act 2007 and the professional misconduct regulation states that it is an act of professional misconduct to contravene a law, if contravention has caused or may cause a child who is under the members professional supervision to be put at or remain at risk.

For more information on the Child and Family Services Act and the Duty to report- see REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: IT IS YOUR DUTY-visit the ECEC at Ontario e-laws and or visit the College of Early Childhood Educators website.

Procedures to Respond to a Serious Occurrence

Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences

STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

Immediately:

Ask for assistance from other staff, students, or volunteers.

Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training, where applicable.

Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel, where applicable.

Ensure that other children are removed from the scene and do not have access to the area, where applicable.

Address any risks to the health or safety of the child and/or other children present to prevent the risk of further harm.

Notify the Head of School and/or supervisor/designate.

Ongoing and after the incident:

Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. police, CAS, public health, etc.)

Ensure that children are always supervised.

Within 24 hours:

Document the incident in:

the daily written record.

the child's record of symptoms of illness, if applicable; and/or

in an accident report, if applicable.

Where an accident report is created, provide a signed copy to a parent of the child.

STEPS FOR THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/SUPERVISOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

1. Immediately:

Help children, staff, students, volunteers and families.

Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training.

Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel, where applicable.

Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:

Collect all pertinent information to report the incident to the Ministry of Education as a serious occurrence, including:

A description of the incident.

The date, time, place where it occurred, actions taken and outcome.

The current status of the incident and child/parties involved; and

All other parties notified (e.g., emergency services, CAS, parents).

What further action is required.

Is there a need for investigation or a follow up report.

Report the serious occurrence in CCLS or notify the Ministry of Education program advisor and Board President by telephone or email where CCLS is not available. **Note:** Where CCLS is not available, a serious occurrence report will be submitted in CCLS as soon as it becomes available.

Post a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by the school in a place that is visible and accessible to parents.

Ongoing and after the incident:

Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. police, CAS, public health, etc.)

Always maintain confidentiality.

Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.

Conduct an internal review of the serious occurrence with staff, students and volunteers to establish next steps and reduce probability of repeat occurrences.

Provide children, parents, staff, students and/or volunteers with supports, if needed.

Review with staff, students and volunteers the school's program statement policies and procedures that set out prohibited practices and expectations of promoting the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all children.

Steps to Follow According to Specific Serious Occurrence Categories

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Death of a Child

STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

Death occurs while a child is receiving care & education:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers.

STEPS FOR THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/SUPERVISOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Head of School/Supervisor/Designate, and

Death occurs while a child is receiving care & education:

1. Immediately, upon becoming aware of the incident:

Contact a parent of the child, or where a parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.

Death occurs while a child is not receiving care & education:

Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:

Contact local Children's Aid Society (CAS) or police services to find out if there is an investigation. If an investigation is ongoing, conduct an internal investigation after CAS or police services have completed their investigation, if applicable.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect

STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and

Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by any person:

1. Immediately:

Report concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA).

Document the conversation with CAS and follow their recommendations.

Notify the Head of School, supervisor/designate of the incident and the report made to CAS, where appropriate.

Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.

Always maintain confidentiality.

STEPS FOR THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/SUPERVISOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Head of School/Supervisor/Designate, and where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by a staff, student or volunteer, or where a person has otherwise reported alleged abuse/neglect concerns to the supervisor/designate:

1. Immediately:

Notify the person who reported concerns about their duty to report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CFSA)*.

Report the concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the CYFSA, unless it is confirmed that a report has already been made to CAS.

Document the concerns.

Contact and notify a parent of the child, where appropriate.

Based on the nature of the allegation and/or the direction of CAS and/or internal policies, determine next steps such as disciplinary measures and additional actions, such as an internal investigation to protect children in care.

Determine whether the individual alleged to have abused/neglected a child is registered with a professional regulatory body (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, etc.). If so:

Report the allegation of abuse to the appropriate regulatory body.

Report to the College of Early Childhood Educators when the employment of a registered early childhood educator (RECE) is suspended or terminated or if the RECE resigns.

Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.

Always maintain confidentiality.

Once all external investigations are complete (e.g. by police and/or CAS), if applicable:

Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.

- Update all other authorities to whom the allegation was reported (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, CAS, etc.).

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Life-threatening Injury or Illness

a. Injury

b. Illness

c. Confirmed case of COVID-19

STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers.

STEPS FOR THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/SUPERVISOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Head of School, Supervisor/Designate.

A Serious Occurrence is required to be submitted under the category “**confirmed case of COVID-19**” when one of the following individuals has a **confirmed** case of COVID-19:

- i) A child who receives childcare at a home childcare premises or a childcare centre,
- ii) A home childcare **provider**
- iii) A person who is **ordinarily a resident of a home childcare premises** (e.g. The home childcare provider’s child the home childcare provider’s spouse etc.; for complete definition please refer to the Home Child Care Licensing Manual),
- iv) A person who **is regularly at a home childcare premises** (e.g. The home provider’s friend who visits the premises once a week etc.; for complete definition please refer to the Home Child Care Licensing Manual),
- v) A **home childcare visitor**,
- vi) A **parent of a child** mentioned in subclause (i) or,
- vii) A **staff member** at a home childcare or childcare centre,
- viii) A **student** at a home childcare premises or childcare centre

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Missing or Unsupervised Child(ren)

a. Child was found

b. Child is still missing

STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

‘Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences’ for staff, students and volunteers, and

1. Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child or children are missing:

Alert the Head of School, supervisor/designate, and all staff, students, and volunteers.

Search the school premises, including outdoor areas (e.g. hallways, washrooms, playground, outdoor classrooms, etc.).

Ensure that remaining children are always supervised.

a) Where the child or children are not found after being deemed missing.

Continue to search the premises.

Update the Head of School, supervisor/designate.

Where the child or children are found after being deemed missing.

Update the Head of School, supervisor/designate.

After the child or children have been found, after being deemed missing:

Document the incident in the daily written record.

STEPS FOR THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/SUPERVISOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See ‘Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences’ for the Head of School, Supervisor/Designate.

1. Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child is missing:

Assist with searching for the missing child(ren).

a) Where the child or children are not found after being deemed missing:

Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel.

Contact the child(ren)'s parent(s), or where a parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.

Where the child or children are found after being deemed missing:

Update the child(ren)'s parent(s), or where a parent cannot be reached the child(ren)'s emergency contact(s).

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations/Other emergency relocation or temporary closure

- a. Fire**
- b. Flood**
- c. Gas Leak**
- d. Detection of Carbon Monoxide**
- e. Outbreak**
- f. Lockdown**
- g. Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure**

STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and

a) Where the incident is suspected to be an outbreak:

1. Immediately:

Notify the Head of School, supervisor/designate on site of concerns.

Separate children who are showing symptoms of illness from other children.

Follow the school's sanitary practices policy and procedures.

Within 24 hours:

Record symptoms of ill health in the affected child(ren)'s records,

Document the incident in the daily written record.

a) Where the incident is not an outbreak (all other disruptions of normal operations):

1. Immediately:

Follow the school's fire safety and evacuation plan and/or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.

Within 24 hours:

Document the incident in the daily written record.

STEPS FOR THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/SUPERVISOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Head of School, Supervisor/Designate, and

A) Where the incident is suspected to be an outbreak:

1. Immediately:

Contact the local public health department.

Where the incident is deemed an outbreak by public health:

1. Immediately:

Follow instructions from the local public health department.

Contact the parent(s) of the affected child(ren) and ensure the affected child(ren) are picked up by their parent(s) and/or taken to hospital.

Obtain an outbreak posting from the local Medical Officer of Health and post in an area easily accessible for parents.

Note: Outbreaks must be reported as a serious occurrence only if deemed an outbreak by public health.

Within 24 hours:

Notify all parents of children enrolled at the school of the outbreak.

B) Where the incident is deemed an outbreak, follow sanitary practices policy. Where the incident is not an outbreak (all other disruptions of normal operations):

1. Immediately:

Follow the school's fire safety and evacuation plan and/or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.

Note: a hold and secure (an external threat in the area) is not a reportable serious occurrence.

Serious Occurrences- Emergency Numbers

Authority: Child Care and Early Years Act 2014
Public Health, Child Care Manual, Fourth Edition
Niagara Region Children Services

Intent: To ensure that the appropriate services can be contacted promptly and that the basic information about each child in care is readily available in case of an

Policy: Up-to-date phone numbers must be readily accessible to staff in the event of an emergency.

Procedure: All emergency phone numbers must be readily accessible in each Site

The following emergency numbers must be posted by the telephone in each Site:

1. 911
2. Fire Department
3. Nearest Hospital
4. Nearest ambulance service
5. Poison Control Centre
6. Police Department
7. Taxi Service
8. Local Family and Children's Services
9. Local Health Department
10. Emergency Shelter
11. Nelephant's Main Office

The children's emergency records for all children in enrolled, must be kept up-to-date and be readily accessible to all staff and contain the following information:

- Home/work addresses and telephone numbers of at least one parent/guardian.
- Phone number of and alternate emergency contact or notation indicating that the parents are the only contact.
- Where applicable, special medical or additional information provided by parents, including any allergies or known medical conditions.

Staff Emergency Numbers:

1. Name and number of a person to call in case of a staff emergency.
2. Home phone numbers of the Head of School, Board President and Supervisors.

After Hours:

1. The Head of School of the school is called in case of an emergency
2. If the Head of School is unavailable, the Academic/Toddler Supervisor and/or Board President is to be contacted.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy

Intent: Nelephant Montessori School is dedicated to ensuring the delivery of high quality education and care to all families. Children should be in a healthy, safe, happy environment. Nelephant is committed to work in partnership with families to resolve any concerns and complaints that they may have about their child's education and care.

Definitions: Complaint: an expression of grievance or resentment where the family is seeking redress or justice.

CECE: College of Early Childhood Educators

FACS: Family and Children Services

MEDU: Ministry of Education

RECE: Registered Early Childhood Educator

Policy: Nelephant Montessori School will provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed, and resolutions will be found. This will ensure that families have access to support and direction when attempting to resolve a complaint.

Families can expect their concerns will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner. Staff will work in partnership with the family to resolve the issue or concern. We ask that families as well work in partnership with the staff in respectful, cooperative and courteous manner.

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 from Nelephant staff to an issue or concern will be provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) within **2-3 business days**. Some complaints can be resolved within a matter of days. Other complaints may take longer if they are complex. The Head of School and Academic/Toddler Supervisor will maintain a record of parent complaints on the Family Complaint Log Form.

At any time during the process the family may choose to involve an external agency such as the Ministry of Education, the College of Early Childhood Educators or Family and Children's Services.

Confidentiality will be adhered to throughout the complaint resolution process. This means that the complaint will only be discussed by those people directly involved in the resolution process and/or governing bodies/agencies such as the CECE or FACS.

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 Head of School, Academic Supervisor or Toddler Supervisor.

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/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedure:

First Point of Contact (should always be the school)

The family is advised to:

- Contact the school staff, academic supervisor or director to discuss the concern.
- Schedule a time with the appropriate person to talk about your concerns
- Be prepared to make notes ahead of time about your concerns.
- Put their concerns in writing.
- Be clear about what's being said (if you need clarification or have concerns about the school's response, ask them to explain further).
- Arrange a follow up meeting if necessary.

If you are unsatisfied or still have concerns, you may want to move to the second point of contact.

Second Point of Contact

The family is advised to

- Connect with the President of the Parent Board

Move to the third point of contact if unsatisfied or still have concerns.

Third Point of Contact

- 1- You may make a complaint to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Complaint line (program concerns):
 - Telephone: 1-877-510-5333
 - Email: childcare_ontario@Ontario.ca
- 2- Complaints regarding Registered Early Childhood Educators can be filed with the regulatory body of the College of Early Childhood Educators at: 1-888-961-8558 or: info@college-ece.ca
- 3- Family and Children's Services (FACS) Niagara (children in need of protection)
 - 905-937-7731
- 4- Public Health, Niagara Region (environmental concerns)
 - 905-688-3762 or 1-800-263-7248

Accommodations for Children Policy

Nelephant Montessori School is committed to creating a program that is inclusive and barrier-free to ensure the full participation of all children. Nelephant Montessori School aims to foster an environment that encourages and supports accommodation requests by working with parents/guardians on strategies to accommodate the needs of their child(ren).

In working towards this goal, the school will strive to provide support for and facilitate parent/guardian requests for accommodation consistent with the protected grounds outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Child Care and Early Years Act and AODA.

Nelephant Montessori School is committed to striving to the extent possible to accommodate children who have behavioural issues related to a disability when administering this policy. Nelephant Montessori School will, where it is possible and reasonable to do so and does not cause undue hardship, alter existing practices, adopt new policies or practices, make adjustments to the program or school once the parent/guardian has provided the appropriate documentation supporting the request for accommodation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the school with:

- A clear statement of the obligations and responsibilities that are inherent in the school accommodation process
- Set out guidelines and standards for the implementation of this policy
- Recognizing the need for accommodation can be either requested by a parent/guardian or recognized by a staff member working with the child

OBJECTIVES

Within the guidelines and requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Child Care and Early Years Act the organization is committed to:

- Ensuring that each request will be considered individually, on a case-by-case basis, to determine accommodation requirements
- Working to eliminate barriers that prevent children from accessing or participating in the school
- Achieving a culture and school environment that is supportive of children including reviewing policies and practices to ensure that they are not discriminatory
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable legislation and the school's policies
- Establishing an efficient and timely accommodation process that is consistent
- The school will develop (jointly with the parents/guardian and the treating physician if appropriate) an accommodation plan that respects the dignity of the individual child, promotes integration and full participation and respects confidentiality
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for the accommodation process

- Ensuring all parents/guardians are advised of their right to be accommodated.

NELEPHANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Respect the dignity of the parent/guardian by accepting a parent's/guardian's request for accommodation in good faith
- Advise parents/guardians of available accommodations, support services, and resources
- Ensure that the accommodation provided meets the specific circumstances, while at the same time working to ensure general accessibility for all children in terms of spatial and physical requirements
- Ensure the necessary steps are taken to determine what modifications might be required for a child to participate fully in the school
- Be inclusive by ensuring that the parent/guardian is involved in the process
- Consult with appropriate specialists, obtain expert advice where needed to determine individual accommodation requirements
- Ensure that all accommodation requests are considered on an individual basis
- Limit requests for information to those reasonably related to the nature of the need or limitation, and only for the purpose of facilitating access to the program.
- Deal with accommodation requests in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the school environment is welcoming and that all children treat one another with respect.
- Take immediate remedial action in situations where bullying and harassment is or may be taking place; and,
- Educate all staff and placement students about disability-related issues.
- Take an active role in ensuring that alternative approaches and possible accommodation solutions are investigated, review various forms of possible accommodation and alternative solutions up to the point of undue hardship.
- Work to identify an appropriate accommodation which meets the needs of the child in an equitable and financially responsible manner.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Inform the organization of the need for an accommodation related to disability in writing to the Head of School, Academic or Toddler Supervisor
- Provide sufficient information regarding limitations and restrictions that impact the child's ability to be able to participate in the program
- Cooperate and be involved in the development and implementation of a reasonable accommodation plan based on their current abilities and the availability of meaningful work
- Communicate any known accommodation needs to the Head of School, Academic or Toddler Supervisor. To facilitate the accommodation process, parents/guardians will not unreasonably withhold such information
- Provide the school with all medical and/or other relevant information that pertains to the accommodation request

- Participate in the accommodation process. The school reserves the right to determine the nature of the accommodation.
- Communicate any issues or problems with the accommodation plan in writing to the Head of School, Academic or Toddler Supervisor as required
- Inform the school immediately when there are changes in the child's needs

BEST PRACTICES

- Nelephant Montessori will review all admissions material to ensure that it provides information on the accommodation process and invites prospective families and new participants to request an accommodation if required.
- Create an accommodation process that is transparent, can be followed consistently and is easily documented including goals and review dates.
- Maintain regular documentation on the child's progress and response to the accommodations that have been put in place. Be prepared to modify our school goals /interventions for the child to better meet his/her needs.
- Set regular review meetings with the parents to ensure the accommodation plan is meeting the child's needs. Document all meetings in writing. Have the parents sign off on the plan and provide them with a copy of the plan for their own records.
- If the accommodation plan is not working and we may need to discharge the child from our program contact our lawyer before proceeding.
- Be proactive about managing the message when other parents start to complain or gossip by scripting a response that addresses concerns without disclosing confidential information

REGISTRATION and ENROLLMENT

Nelephant Montessori will ensure that an enrollment meeting takes place with all families once they have been accepted into the school. The meeting will include but not limited to the following:

- School/program information
- Review of policies and procedures including accessibility, accommodation and withdrawal policies
- Meeting the child prior to admission
- Tour of the school
- Enrollment packages which includes the Program Statement (found in handbook) and Parent Handbook
- Cultural Observances
- Allergy information and requirements

Please note a parent's failure to disclose their child's disability or request of an accommodation at this phase does not nullify our duty to accommodate should it become apparent once the child has begun school.

Dismissal from School Policy

Dismissal Policy

Nelephant Montessori is a family-oriented community based on respect. Respect for yourself. Respect for others and the community. Respect for the environment. We understand that all members of the Nelephant Montessori community - staff, board members, students and parents - will have responsibility for behaving in a respectful manner towards one another and for promoting respect in and for our school.

It is understood and agreed that the school in its sole discretion, is entitled to require the withdrawal of us as parents and our child at any time (i) for conduct inconsistent with the school's values; (ii) for breach of the school's rules, regulations or this agreement, or (iii) in the event that the interests of the school or members of the Nelephant Montessori community would be prejudiced by our child's continued presence. The balance of the unused annual school fees from the date of dismissal will be refunded to us, less any monies owing by us to Nelephant Montessori.

We understand that Nelephant Montessori may dismiss our child when any fees or other amounts owing are not paid when and as required. If Nelephant Montessori dismisses the child for non-payment of fees, the balance owed by us to Nelephant Montessori will be the amount of school fees payable to the date of dismissal, the amount owing on account of Before and After School Supervision, and the June pre-paid, non-refundable tuition.

Withdrawal Policy

Nelephant Montessori has annual financial commitments for staff salaries, school maintenance and operations, the income for which is largely derived from tuition. Nelephant Montessori has pedagogical requirements as to class size and location, balance of age and gender, and positive peer groupings, etc., the planning for which is undertaken immediately after re-enrolment. When a child is enrolled, a place in the school is reserved for the entire school year.

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given one (1) month in advance of leaving and all deposits and non-refundable fees are forfeited. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged. Withdrawal notice is still required should a family withdraw prior to a child's start date, and all deposits and non-refundable fees are forfeited.

A permanent space can only be guaranteed when there is a temporary withdrawal of a child if full fees continue to be paid.

COVID-19 Nelephant Montessori School Operations

Intent: The Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak CHILD CARE RE-OPENING guidelines has set new operational measures that are required in order to safely re-open childcare.

Definitions:

Cohort: a group of children and the staff members assigned to them.

Reducing Risk of Spreading the Illness

- All staff, volunteers and regular visitors are required to be fully vaccinated or must complete regular rapid antigen Covid-19 testing as directed in provincial guidance.
- Everyone entering the building, including all staff, children or visitors, will complete a Health Screen and must pass before entering. All visitors will sign in and out on the visitor log.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze by using a tissue or coughing into your sleeve or elbow; dispose of the tissue immediately into a garbage can and wash your hands.
- Teach and encourage the children to cover their coughs and sneezes by coughing into their sleeve or elbow when developmentally appropriate and wash their hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze and assist the children with doing the same.
- When soap and water are not readily available, alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer with 60% - 90% alcohol is required by Public Health unless otherwise directed/approved by Public Health.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth to prevent the spreading of germs.
- Physically distancing yourself (2 meters) when possible to prevent the spread of illness.
- Wearing facial masks and eye protection as per bylaw requirements.
- If you develop symptoms, contact a physician, Niagara Region Public Health or **Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 (24-7)** for direction.
- Limit contact with others during this time as a preventative measure.
- Current Public Health guidelines around Group events e.g.: family nights, community meetings etc. will be followed at all times.

Staffing

- All staff will complete a Health Screen prior to entering the building each morning.
- Maximum cohort size for each room will follow the most current Ministry guidelines
- This does not apply to Resource Consultants supporting the program.
- Cohorts must stay together throughout the day and are not permitted to mix with other cohorts unless absolutely necessary. Staff will only mix if necessary to maintain proper ratio.
- Movement of Head of School and/or designates, staff, supply staff and student teachers between childcare locations and between classrooms is permitted only when necessary.
- Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) room licensing and ratios expectations must be maintained.
- Reduced ratios are permitted as set out under the CCEYA provided that cohorts are not mixed with other cohorts unless absolutely necessary. If cohorts must be mixed in emergency situations, proper attendance records will be kept to track who was in each cohort during that time.

Staff Schedules

- Head of School and Supervisors will work together to set staff scheduling and implement to ensure:
 - Staff, children, and cohorts are set and maintained whenever possible.
 - If possible, supply/replacement staff should be assigned to a specific location.
 - Scheduling of staff will consider that cohorts should not be mixed at the beginning or end of the day, unless absolutely necessary to.
- Schedules may be required to be adjusted based on operational needs and hours of care that families will require.

Visitors/Volunteers Attendance

- **All visitors/volunteers will complete the self-screen upon arrival and before moving past the screening area. They will also sign the Visitor Logbook.**
- The number of indoor visitors will be limited to the ability to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 meters.
- Daily records must be kept of anyone entering the school in the Visitor Logbook.
- These records must include the name, contact information, time of arrival and departure, screening completion/results of the visitor.
- Records must be kept on site, up-to-date, and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.
- Orientations/meetings with families will take place by video, telephone or online whenever possible.
- Parents are discouraged from entering the building past the screening area unless absolutely necessary. In the event that a parent is required to enter the school, they will be required to complete a self-screen and sign the visitor log before entering.
- **Outside Services:**
 - Essential delivery services will be required to complete a health screen before entering the school.
 - If they are unable to enter due to screening result, the company will be contacted, and arrangements will be made for another delivery or alternative to the delivery.
 - If safe to do so, the product can be left outdoors and be brought into the school by a staff member.
 - The School must maintain daily records of anyone entering the facility. These records must include the name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, screening completion/result of the individual. This log must be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.

Physical Distancing with Children

- Maintaining a welcoming and caring environment for children is imperative while following the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy in the classrooms.
- When setting up the environment, physical distancing of at least 6 feet (2 meters) must be maintained between cohorts when indoors, and will be encouraged, where possible, between children within the same cohort:
 - Every effort should be made to spread children out into different areas, particularly at meal and dressing time.
 - Individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children should be incorporated in the program.

- Staff should use visual cues such as pictures, stop signs etc. to promote physical distancing.
- For physical distancing with toddlers,
 - Staff will plan activities that limit shared objects or toys.
 - When possible, staff should move activities outside to allow for more space, weather permitting.
 - Mouthed toys should be removed immediately for cleaning and disinfecting and must not be shared with other children.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Face Coverings

- Will be used as directed by the Niagara Region Public Health and Medical Officer of Health.
- Will align with the Ministry of Health guidelines.
<https://box5673.bluehost.com:2096/cpsess8843848277/3rdparty/roundcube/?task=mail&frame=1&mbox=INBOX.COVID-19.Region%20Ministry&uid=112&part=3&action=get&extwin=1>
- Use of PPE will be required:
 - In the screening area.
 - While working in close contact with the children.
 - When cleaning and disinfecting blood or bodily fluid spills if there is a risk of splashing.
 - When caring for a sick child or a child showing symptoms of illness.
- When wearing masks or face coverings:
 - Be sure to wash hands before donning the mask/face covering and before doffing the mask.
 - Follow the Niagara Region Tip sheet for donning and doffing a mask/face covering and for proper procedure.
 - Staff will read fact sheets and watch videos to ensure proper use.
- Reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wearing of masks and eye protection:
 - Eye protection may be removed when outdoors when a distance of 2 meters can be maintained. Because of the spontaneous nature of young children, it is recommended that adults keep their masks on as much as possible while outside.
 - Indoors when a physical distance of at least 2 meters can be maintained i.e. staff lunch area, office area, kitchen area
 - Anyone with a medical condition that prevents them from wearing these items.
***** A physician's note will be required *****

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand Hygiene should be conducted by anyone entering the childcare setting and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day for both staff and children.

- Soap and water are preferred whenever possible.
- Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR) can be used by both adults and children. It is most effective when hands are not visibly soiled. (60-90% alcohol).
- ABHR must be stored out of reach of young children.
- For any dirt, blood, body fluids, it is preferred that hands be washed with soap and water.
- Tissues and lined, no-touch waste baskets (i.e., foot pedal-operated, open basket) will be provided.
- ABHR (60-90% alcohol) will be available at each entry point and plain liquid soap dispensers, sinks and paper towels in dispensers are available at each sink.
- Hand hygiene will be completed at the following times:

- Upon entering the School.
- After screening each individual upon entry to the school
- Before/After direct physical contact with families/children.
- After each transition whenever possible.
- Before/after preparing, serving, or eating food.
- Before/after staff break/lunch times.
- After diapering a child, cleaning up messes or wiping a nose.
- After toileting, a child or self.
- After sneezing or coughing.
- After a child sneezes or coughs in close proximity.
- Before and after sensory play
- After taking out garbage.
- Before/after giving any medications.
- Before/after applying sunscreen or insect repellent to each individual child.
- After contact with blood/body fluids.
- When hands are visibly soiled.
- After using protective gloves.
- After completion of work shift to avoid taking micro-organisms home.
- If handling chemicals, wash hands **before** eating, drinking smoking, or using the washroom.

Hand Washing Procedures:

- Use a hand wash sink supplied with hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid soap in a dispenser.
- Use soap and water for soiled hands. Wet hands under running water.
- Apply soap to palm of hand.
- Use friction to clean between fingers, palms, backs of hands, wrists forearms and under nails and base of thumbs for approximately 20 seconds.
- Rinse under running water for a count of 5 seconds.
- Dry with a clean towel or paper towel.
- Turn off taps with a paper towel.
- Dispose of paper towel in an appropriate container.

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub Procedures:

- Alcohol-based hand rubs should only be used if your hands are not visibly soiled and if soap and water are not readily available.
- If possible, remove hand and wrist jewelry.
- Apply one to two pumps of hand rub (about the size of a “loonie”) onto one palm. Rub your hands together. Clean all surfaces of your hands, concentrating on fingertips, between the fingers, nail beds, back of your hands and base of thumbs.
- Continue rubbing hands until product is dry; this will take a minimum of 20 seconds if sufficient product is used.
- If your hands look dirty and running water is not available, use a moistened towelette to remove dirt, followed by the use of an alcohol-based hand rub.

NOTE: When soap and water are not readily available, alcohol-based hand rubs are the preferred method for cleaning your hands, provided they contain alcohol concentrations of 60% or higher unless directed/approved by Public Health.

NOTE: Disposable non-latex gloves are to be used for infection control purposes (available in each site); however, the use of disposable non-latex gloves does not replace the need for hand washing.

Disposable Glove Use:

Staff will:

- Wash hands before/after glove use.
- Gloves are intended for single use per task.
- Store disposable non-latex gloves in a cool, dry place.
- Use as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Remove after use and dispose of in the regular garbage (never wash and reuse).
- Wash hands as indicated above after disposable non-latex gloves are removed.

NOTE: Remove gloves from wrist and peel inside out prior to disposal.

Program Guidelines and Practices

1. Equipment and Toy Usage and Restrictions

1. Staff will provide toys and equipment that can be cleaned and disinfected whenever possible (avoiding plush toys).
2. Mouthed toys will be cleaned and disinfected immediately after the child is finished using them, or before being replaced on the shelf for other children to use.
3. If sensory materials (i.e., playdough, sand, etc.) are offered, emphasis should be placed on hand hygiene before and after each use.
4. Sponges used by the children will be bleached at the end of each day.
5. Cloths used by the children will be laundered each day.

2. Lunch and snack Times

- Children will not be permitted to self-serve.
- Staff will ensure tables have been cleaned and disinfected before/after eating.
- Staff will promote physical distancing at the lunch and snack table by maximizing space between chairs whenever possible.
- Staff will ensure all children/staff wash hands before/after eating.

3. Limit the amount of group play/activities or social distance when taking part in them as much as possible.

- Staff should incorporate more individual activities into the program
- Singing is permitted indoors; masking is encouraged but not required for singing indoors if a minimum of two meters distance can be maintained.
- When dressing for outdoor activities, children should be transitioned in small groups to promote physical distancing.

4. Field Trips

- Allowance of Field Trips will align with the Ministry of Education's most up to date regulations.
- If allowed:
 - Children should be cohorted for the duration of the trip.
 - Health and safety requirements set out in the guidelines and regulations (e.g. masking/eye protection) and of the place being visited will be followed.

- Daily records of all individuals attending the trip will be maintained to facilitate contact tracing (name, contact info, time of arrival/departure, transportation, location visited).

Staff Training

- Staff will receive updates through COVID-19 Update emails.
- Staff will access current information from the Niagara Region's COVID-19 page <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/default.aspx>
- All staff must be trained on the proper use face coverings which will include but not limited to:

Fact Sheet & FAQ's Face Coverings for Non-Healthcare Workers

<https://vine.niagararegion.ca/emp-centre/COVID%20Resources%20for%20Employees/COVID-19%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Face%20Coverings%20for%20Non-Healthcare%20Workers.pdf>

Putting on One Piece Facial Protection

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC1U9OlbUKo&feature=emb_rel_end

Putting on Mask and Eye Protections

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YiljLXvg4&list=TLPQMzAwNDIwMjBPX7w-IAYvPA&index=2>

How to Wash Hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9hjmges72I>

How to Rub Hands with Sanitizer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDUJ4CAYhpA>

Putting Gloves On

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIBmi578NmE>

Taking off Gloves

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDI0Zj573Js>

Taking Off PPE-open in google chrome only

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>

All staff that are included in the ratios must have valid certification in Standard First Aid Training, including Infant and Child CPR required for staff that are included in the ratios. *Please reference the Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak guide for further information.*

Vulnerable Sector Checks (VSC)

- VSC's are required to be obtained from staff and other persons who are interacting with children on the premises.

- Licensee is not required to obtain VSC's from staff and other persons interacting with children where the fifth anniversary of the staff and other person's most recent VSC falls within the emergency period, until 60 days after the emergency period ends.

COVID-19 Illness/Exposure Protocol

Intent: The procedure must be followed by Nelephant Montessori School staff in the event that a child, parent, or staff member at the school is exposed to COVID-19.

Definitions:

SO: Serious Occurrence

CCLS: Child Care Licencing System

Procedure:

In the event of exposure: If a child, parent or employee exhibits COVID-19 or symptoms indicating that they are unwell, they should be sent home immediately to avoid spreading the illness. A child, parent or employee will not be allowed to return to school until they have been cleared to return by an appropriate medical professional, or as prescribed by what is permissible under a public health agency.

If a child becomes sick during care, the child will be separated from the other children. The sick child should wear a face covering until they leave the school if they are able to. Children under the age of two are not recommended to wear face coverings. Families will be contacted for immediate pick up from the school. All surfaces and handled items, and activities that the child has used will be cleaned and disinfected in the room of the ill child. Staff will track in the daily logbook the children's illness. Wherever possible toys will be removed, cleaned, and disinfected. The Head of School, Supervisor or designate will contact Public Health (PH) to advise that a client/staff has been instructed to contact PH for direction.

Nelephant Montessori School will follow Publics Health's Medical Officer of Health's direction if a child, parent, or employee test positive for COVID-19.

Serious Occurrence:

- Serious Occurrence must be filed for children/staff that have a confirmed case of COVID-19 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* or You become aware of a confirmed case of COVID-19 related to:
 - A child enrolled at the school.
 - A staff of the licensee currently working at the school.

Steps for filing COVID-19 related Serious Occurrence:

- SO report must be filed through CCLS as "confirmed case of COVID-19"
- Notify Children's Services Manager.
- Notify local Public Health unit immediately and follow **all** direction.
- Notify Child Care Quality Assurance Licensing Branch Regional Manager (Children's Services Manager or Supervisor will complete this step).
- Notify Parent Board.
- Notify all parents of children enrolled at Nelephant under the direction of Niagara Public Health
- Follow the regular Serious Occurrence reporting requirements (including submitting a SO report in CCLS and posting the SO notification form).

Communication:

- Nelephant will follow all direction from the NPH in regard to when and how to communicate information about a communicable disease and/or outbreak to parents/guardians and staff.
- Nelephant is committed to providing information in a reasonable timely, respectful manner to all parents/guardians and staff about communicable diseases or outbreaks. This will include but is not limited to emails, phone calls, posted signs on doors/walls of the school, etc.

Preventative Protocol:

Vaccination

- **All staff, student teachers, volunteers and regular visitors will be full vaccinated or will be required to complete regular Covid-19 testing as directed in provincial guidance.**

Screening

- All staff will complete and answer all questions on the Health Screen prior to commencing their shift.
- All children will complete and answer all questions on the Health Screen prior to arriving at school.
- All essential visitors will be screened at the front entrance by a staff. A face mask must be worn while inside the building.
- Families will be notified of the screening process during their orientation.
- If they fail the Health Screen for any reason, their entrance is not approved into the school
- All staff, children and visitors must use hand sanitizer upon entry into the school.
- The Health Check Screening Checklist is completed.

COVID-19 current symptoms as listed on Niagara Region Public Health's COVID-19 website <https://niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/symptoms.aspx>, and the Health Check Screen as approved by Public Health.

- Each staff and family response must be recorded on the Health Check Screening checklist.
- Each Health Check Screening checklist will be stored on premises following record retention policies.
- If the Health Screen is failed, entry into the school will not be permitted. They will be advised to contact their healthcare professional or Public Health based on the instructions on the Health Screen.
 - Public Health Novel CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) link: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/default.aspx?topic=1>
 - COVID-19 Public Health Info Line: 905-688-8248 ext. 7019
 - COVID-19 Public Health Chat Link: <https://vue.comm100.com/chatWindow.aspx?siteId=232657&planId=531#>
 - Complete Public Health's COVID-19 Self-Assessment: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>
- Only one family at a time will be permitted to be screened at each designated entrance.
- Additional families awaiting entrance will be reminded to keep physical distancing space between each other while they wait.

- Markers every 6 ft. (2 meters) will be set up reminding people to keep a safe space.
- If touched, all door handles must be disinfected in-between each family by the screening staff (See Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol)
- Children will be transitioned to the classrooms by a staff.
- At pick up times, parents will be encouraged to wait at the entrance/playground for staff to accompany their child(ren) to the door/gate. Physical Distancing measures will be followed.
- If they request to enter the building for any reason, they will be screened prior to entering and will sign the Visitor's Log.

Actions to Protect Your Health

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneezing and cough into your sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Remind parents that they should be monitoring their children's health and keeping children who are unwell at home.
- If travelling outside of Canada, stay home for the Public Health required isolation period.
- The use of face coverings is mandated throughout the day for all adults and strongly recommended for children over the age of 2.
- Medical grade masks and shields will be provided for staff.

Management of individuals with possible illness (COVID-19)

If a child begins to experience symptoms of illness (COVID-19) while attending school, it is recommended that:

- The ill individual must be immediately separated from others, in a separate room where possible. Parents/guardians must be contacted for pick-up of symptomatic children.
- Symptomatic children who are separated from others will be supervised at all times.
- Anyone providing care to the ill individual should maintain as much physical distance as possible. If physical distancing is not possible (e.g., if a young child needs comfort) staff will wear additional PPE as currently required by Public Health at that time (i.e., gloves, gown).
- The person caring for the individual must wear a medical mask and eye protection and be trained on proper use of PPE.
 - If tolerated, the ill individual should also wear a medical mask.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced while the ill individual is waiting to be picked up.
- Environmental cleaning of the space the child was separated should be conducted once the child has been picked up.
- The parent/guardian will be advised to use the online self-assessment tool and follow instructions which may include seeking medical advice and/or a Covid-19 test.
- Communication protocols to update and inform necessary stakeholders within the school community while maintaining confidentiality will be initiated under the direction of Public Health.
- Regular childcare operations can continue unless directed otherwise by Public Health.

- **Children/Staff with symptoms or household members have symptoms of Covid-19 must be excluded from school as per Public Health instructions.**

Additional Support Procedures

- The Head of School or designate will check Niagara Regions Public Health Novel Coronavirus Update website regularly: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/default.aspx?topic=1>
- All staff will review regular internal updates and any notifications regarding the Niagara Region COVID-19 Updates

Additional Staffing Supports

- Employees can access the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).
- If you are seeking Access to EFAP it is 24/7/365 – by telephone or online:
 - Call Life Works toll free at 1-866-331-6851
 - Via www.grouphealth.ca or:
 - Online access to request services.
 - First Chat: to type/text a real-time conversation with a counsellor.
 - E-Counselling to exchange written messages online with a counsellor.
- Staff can access the MyGroupHEALTH EFAP mobile application that provides on-the-go support with a timely selection of articles, videos, and direct access to e-counselling.
- myGroupHEALTH app can be downloaded from the App Store or Goggle Play.

** See the Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak, Child Care Re-opening for full details and expectations as per the Ministry of Education.

https://box5673.bluehost.com:2096/cpsess8843848277/3rdparty/roundcube/?_task=mail&_frame=1&_mbox=INBOX.COVID-19.Region%20Ministry&_uid=112&_part=3&_action=get&_extwin=1

*** Please note that the following regulatory changes to *O. REG 137/15* have been made under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA). These regulatory requirements are aligned with the guidance provided in Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak.

- Support Physical Distancing
- Implementation of Policies and Procedures
- Support Reporting
- Enhanced Health and Safety Measures
- Parent Fees – Child Care Centres

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement

Nelephant Montessori School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and employees. Nelephant Montessori School will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases within all our locations.

Purpose

To ensure that all employees are aware of, and adhere to, the directive established by Niagara Region Public Health (NPH), and Niagara Children's Services regarding cleaning and disinfecting in all

Application

This policy applies to all employees, students, community members, and any other persons engaged in business with Nelephant Montessori School.

Definitions

Cleaning: refers to the physical removal of foreign material (i.e. dust, soil) and organic material (i.e. blood, secretions, microorganisms). Cleaning removes, rather than kill microorganisms. Warm water, detergent, and mechanical action (i.e. wiping) is required to clean surfaces. Rinsing with clean water is required to complete the cleaning process to ensure the detergent film is removed.

Disinfecting: describes a process completed after cleaning in which a chemical solution (i.e., bleach, Oxivir Tb Ready-to-Use (RTU)), is used to kill most disease-causing microorganisms. In order to be effective disinfectants must be left on a surface for a period of time (contact time). Contact times are generally prescribed by the product manufacturer. Any items children may come into contact with, requires a final rinse after the required contact time is observed.

Procedures

All products including cleaning agents and disinfectants must be out of reach of children, labelled, and must have Safety Data Sheets (SDS) up to date (within three years), which are stored in the WHMIS file folder.

Cleaning

- Use detergent and warm water to clean visibly soiled surfaces
- Rinse the surface with clean water (warm to tepid temperature preferred) to ensure detergent is removed
- Let the surface dry

Disinfecting

Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP) was approved by NPH for use in our school as a disinfectant. The AHP disinfecting products used at Nelephant Montessori School are Oxivir Five 16 Concentrate and Oxivir TB Ready-to-Use (RTU) Spray or Wipes. All are considered high-level disinfectants which is defined as the complete elimination of all microorganisms in or on a surface. Other approved disinfecting agents may be used instead of Oxivir (i.e., Bleach and water at a dilution ratio of 200 p.p.m.).

Disinfecting using Oxivir Tb Ready-To-Use (RTU) Spray & Wipes

- Put on rubber or heavy-duty nitrile gloves and mask if the employee has scent sensitivities

- Spray or wipe on **Oxivir Tb RTU 1-Minute** solution and leave on the surface for the appropriate disinfecting contact time (**1 minute**).
- Once the **1-minute** disinfecting contact time has elapsed, the surface has now been disinfected
- If the surface continues to be wet, you may wipe it dry with a single-use J-cloth and or paper towel

Cleaning and Disinfection Frequency Requirements

Cleaning and disinfecting routines should be increased as the risk of environmental contamination is higher:

- **Tables and countertops:** used for food preparation and food service must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
- **Spills** must be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
- **Washrooms:** staff and children washroom areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least two times per day and as often as necessary (e.g., when visibly dirty or contaminated with body fluids). Shared washrooms must be cleaned between cohort use.
- **High-touch surfaces:** any surfaces at your location that has frequent contact with hands (e.g., tables, sinks, countertops, doorknobs, light switches, phones, handrails, photocopier, etc.) These surfaces should be cleaned at least twice per day and as often as necessary (e.g., when visibly dirty or contaminated with body fluids)
- **Mouthed Materials:** Buckets/containers will be used in each room for materials that have been mouthed by the children or are soiled. These materials will be cleaned and disinfected before being put back into use.

**** High-touch surfaces as well as staff and children's washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day and as needed. However, the risk associated with transmission with shared objects is low. Instead of regular cleaning of shared objects, the focus should be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared equipment. This is especially the case for young children where shared equipment is important for learning. ****

Clean and disinfect as required:

Blood/Bodily Fluid Spills: Using the steps below, the surface must be cleaned first then disinfected:

1. Isolate the area around the spill so that no other objects/humans can be contaminated
2. Gather all supplies, perform hand hygiene, then put on single-use nitrile gloves
3. Scoop up the fluid with disposable paper towels (check the surrounding area for splash/splatter) and dispose of in separate garbage bag
4. Clean the spill area with detergent, warm water, and single-use towels
5. Rinse to remove detergent residue with clean water and single-use towel
6. Discard used paper towels and gloves immediately in a tied plastic bag
7. Spray Oxivir TB Ready-to-Use Disinfectant in and around the spill area and allow the appropriate **1-minute** disinfecting contact time
8. A final rinse is required if children come into contact with the area
9. Remove gloves as directed and discard them immediately
10. Perform hand hygiene as directed

Waste disposal

- There should be an accessible garbage container in each room that is emptied regularly. Foot activated or open basket is preferred.
- Children should be reminded not to touch garbage.
- Keep all garbage containers away from food storage and food preparation areas.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all garbage containers daily.

Cot cleaning and disinfecting:

- Cots must be labelled and assigned/designated to a single child per use
- Cots must be cleaned and disinfected before being assigned to a child
- When possible, cots will be stored in a manner which there is no contact with the sleeping surface of another cot.
- Bedding must be laundered weekly (if they are kept out) on the "hot" setting, and when soiled, wet or the child becomes sick.

Additional Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Hygiene Items

- Pacifiers must be individually labelled and stored separately (not touching each other), they must not be shared among children. The pacifier must be washed in soap and water upon arrival to the school. **Please note: Pacifiers are only for use at sleep time for the Toddlers.**
- Label individual hygiene items such as combs and store them separately
- For creams and lotions during diapering, never put hands directly into lotion or cream bottles, use a tissue or single-use gloves. Upon arrival to the school, wipe the cream/lotion container with a disinfecting wipe

Ventilation

- Best practices and measures to optimize ventilation will be followed.
- Adequate ventilation should be provided in the following ways:
 - Opening windows whenever possible
 - Moving activities outdoors when possible
 - Ensuring HVAC systems are in good working condition
- AirSniper units (using UV Light technology) have been installed throughout the school.

Policy and Procedure Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed and signed off by all employees before commencing employment at Nelephant Montessori School, and at any time where a change is made.

Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

Purpose

Nelephant Montessori School is committed to safeguarding the health, wellbeing, and safety of our employees, children, their families, and the community at large. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), the organization is obligated to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers in the workplace including hazards posed by infectious disease such as COVID-19 and associated variants.

Due to the close proximity of staff to children, parents and other staff members, staff are at increased risk of contracting COVID and for this reason, we strongly recommend that all staff obtain their first and second doses of the COVID vaccine at their earliest opportunity. We also encourage eligible staff to continue to receive booster doses as they become available.

During the pandemic Nelephant is taking additional steps to protect our employees by implementing a vaccination policy based on the guidance and requirements from the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Government. The COVID vaccines have been approved for temporary emergency use and are considered an effective intervention in reducing the impact and spread of Covid-19 in the workplace.

This policy applies to the following people (Required Individuals):

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Students on an educational placement
- Any licensee who regularly interacts with children, staff or providers
- Any person who provides childcare or other services to a child who receives childcare (e.g., special needs resourcing consultants, etc.)
- Any contractors or other individuals who frequently attend the premise, who may have direct contact with any individual listed above or with a child receiving care.

Policy

All people listed above are required to do one of the following:

- 1- Provide proof of full vaccinations against Covid-19 (which will be kept in a confidential medical file for each staff).
 - a. For the purpose of developing the statistical information, Nelephant may ask Required Individuals to disclose whether they have received addition doses, and, if so, to provide proof.
- 2- Provide formal/official documented medical reason for not being vaccinated against Covid-19, provided by a physician or a nurse practitioner (which will be kept in a confidential medical file for each staff) that sets out:
 - a. That the person cannot be vaccinated against Covid-19; and
 - b. The effective time period for the medical reason (i.e., permanent or time-limited).

3- Participate in an educational program approved by the school. Certificate of completion will be kept in the staff's confidential medical file.

Anyone listed above, who is not fully vaccinated, including those with medical reasons, will be required to complete regular Covid-19 testing and provide proof of a negative result, as directed in provincial guidance.

Testing Requirements

Individuals subject to the policy who are not fully vaccinated must regularly complete a rapid antigen test for Covid-19 prior to arriving at work; and provide verification of the negative test result.

“Regularly” will be defined by the current Provincial and Public Health recommendations at the time. Testing should not take place more than 48 hours before arriving at work.

If the test is positive or inconclusive, the individual is required to isolate and submit to a laboratory-based PCR test (if available) to confirm the results as soon as possible (ideally within 48 hours). They are also required to contact the Head of School or Toddler Supervisor immediately so their shift can be covered for the duration of their isolation period.

Educational Session

The educational session has been provided by Nelephant and addresses all of the following learning components:

- How Covid-19 vaccines work.
- Vaccine safety related to the development of the Covid-19 vaccines.
- Benefits of vaccination against Covid-19.
- Risks of not being vaccinated against Covid-19; and
- Possible side effects of Covid-19 vaccination.

The educational session Nelephant will be using is in the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lylv8yFnjcM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWJlgD68LZs> (With ASL translation)

Once completed, the certificate of completion will be kept in the person's confidential medical file.

Statistical Information

- a. Nelephant will collect and maintain statistical (non-identifiable) information that includes:
 - The number of Required Individuals that provided proof of being fully vaccinated against Covid-19.
 - The number of Required Individuals that disclosed receiving additional doses exceeding the number of doses required for full vaccination against Covid-19.

- The number of Required Individuals that provided a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against Covid-19.
 - The number of Required Individuals that completed an educational session about the benefits of Covid-19 vaccination.
 - The total number of the School's Required Individuals to whom these instructions apply.
- b. Nelephant will disclose the Statistical Information to EDU in the manner and within the timelines specified by EDU. EDU may seek additional details within the requested Statistical Information outlined above which will also be specified in the request. EDU may further disclose this Statistical Information and may make it publicly available.

Support for Vaccination

Nelephant will provide the following supports for people subject to this policy to receive a vaccine:

- a. Time off to get the vaccine.
- b. Assistance with booking a vaccine appointment.

Employees will be required to provide proof of vaccination. In order to ensure confidentiality this document will be stored in a secure file that is separate from the employee's personnel file.

Employees who are vaccinated will still be required to wear full PPE until such time as Nelephant is directed differently by Public Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Government of Ontario.

Accommodation

Employees in need of an exemption from this policy due to a medical reason must submit a doctor's note from a licensed medical professional.

Accommodations will be assessed based on the following:

- the ability to maintain the health and safety of others in the workplace as well as
- the operational needs of the organization.

Please note that the accommodation offered may result in changes to your duties (including location) and/or hours of work.

Nelephant is not required under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to accommodate the personal preference for those employees who choose not to obtain a vaccine. In the event that fully vaccinated individuals no longer need PPE, those employees refusing to be vaccinated will be required to continue to wear full PPE until the School at its discretion or due to a change in public health policy eliminates this requirement.

Confidentiality

Nelephant will ensure the proof of vaccination for all employees will be kept confidential. It will be kept in a separate medical file in the locked employee filing drawer.

Nelephant will ensure the information regarding those employees who are unable to be vaccinated will be kept confidential – also in the locked employee filing drawer.

Employees will be reminded not to question other employees regarding their vaccination status as this information is considered confidential medical information.

Nelephant will be required to track and report on the implementation of this policy and provide statistical information to the Ministry of Education and publicly disclose childcare sector immunization status data on a regular basis. No identifying information will be provided to the ministry in relation to this policy; all statistical information will be provided in an aggregate form.

This policy may be modified at anytime based on legislative changes or at the discretion of the School.