



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](mailto:info@nelephant.ca)

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**Website:** [www.nelephant.ca](http://www.nelephant.ca)

**Facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/nelephantmontessori](https://www.facebook.com/nelephantmontessori)

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/nelephantmontessori/?hl=en>



## 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.

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## Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)

Nelephant Montessori School is currently participating in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement between the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. As part of that agreement, we will be reducing our parent fees accordingly and adhering to all other rules and regulations set out for us.

| Base Fees              | Non-Base Fees |
|------------------------|---------------|
| - Enrollment Fee       | - Meeting Fee |
| - Monthly Tuition Fees | - Late Fees   |
| - Lunch Fees           | - NFS Fees    |

- The Enrollment Fee is paid by e-transfer at the time of enrollment. It is non-refundable regardless of withdrawal prior to school starting. This amount is applied towards June's tuition of the current school year.
- If withdrawing throughout the school year (any time after Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year), 30 days written notice is required or a full month of tuition will be charged.
- Tuition Fees are collected through direct withdrawal on the first of each month (Sept. – June) and are non-refundable once paid. Parents do have the option of paying for the full year upfront by cheque or e-transfer.
- Late Fees will be invoiced at the end of the month and can be paid by e-transfer. If not paid within 1 month, they will be added to the following month's Tuition Fee withdrawal.
- The Meeting Fee will be refunded only after attendance at the AGM.

**\*Please refer to the most current Fee Schedule found on our website for detailed fee amounts and payment requirements.**

Nelephant Montessori School runs on a 10-month school year calendar and is closed for periods of time throughout the year – for some of which fees will continue to be charged, and some will require no payment from parents. Specific dates of these closures can be found on this year's Year Long Calendar on our website.

| No Fees Charged to Parents                                          | Regular Fees will be Charged                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Approximately 10 weeks over the summer – July 1 to Labour Day       | All statutory holidays during the 10-month school year |
| 7 Professional Development Days throughout the 10-month school year | 2 weeks over Christmas holidays                        |
|                                                                     | 1 week at March Break                                  |

We are happy to be able to offer this program to our school community and expect this decision will positively impact our current and future families. As we work through the process of offering the CWELCC program, our top priority remains providing a high-quality, Montessori program for your children. If at any time we no longer feel that CWELCC is in the best interest of our school, Nelephant reserves the right to withdraw from that program and to adjust fees accordingly.

# **1- Program Statement**

# Nelephant Montessori's Program Statement

This program statement has been created to outline how Nelephant Montessori School, as a Montessori Canada 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 or AMI accredited educational training institutes. In addition, our assistants are Registered Early Childhood Educators or equivalent and our school is a fully accredited member of Montessori Canada. 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 ages in each room (18month -3 in Toddler and 3-6 in Casa). 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, building things, 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 are dismissed from the playground after lunch. We also offer outdoor time from 8:00-8:30 and 3:30-4:30 during our extended care program. 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 Casa 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. We talk to the children about healthy eating and staff model it for them as well.

We foster the engagement of ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children. During the school year, we have two parent teacher conferences where parents and teachers formally 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 invite each family to come and spend an hour working with their child for an hour throughout the year. At the end of the three-year Casa program, we write very detailed report cards for all of our graduating students.

We document in several ways. Records, social media posts, 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 specialists from The Niagara Children's Center 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 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](mailto:info@nelephant.ca).
- 2- Attend the Annual General Meeting each year.
- 3- Actively participate on chosen Parent Committee and or the Board of Directors. A buyout option is available for those who are unable to commit to participate 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- Ensure your child is picked up prior to 11:30 (half-day) or prior to 4:00 (full-day).
- 7- Inform the office of any absences for any reason (e.g. illness, appointments, etc.) by completing the Absence Report before 8:30am. The Absence Report is found in the Parent Portal of our website: [www.nelephant.ca](http://www.nelephant.ca)
- 8- 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.
- 9- 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.
- 10-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.
- 11-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 – 11:30 am

Full-Day: 8:30 – 4:00 pm

**Please note that late pick-ups cannot be accommodated unless you are part of the After Care program.**

**\*\*If you arrive after your scheduled pick-up time, there is a \$10.00 late fee charge for the first 5 minutes and will increase to \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. You will be invoiced at the end of the month for any late fees owing. \*\***

### 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 your scheduled pick-up time, there is a \$10.00 late fee charge for the first 5 minutes and will increase to \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. You will be invoiced at the end of the month for any late fees owing. \*\***

## 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.

What toilet trained looks like in the Casa classroom:

- Child can independently recognize the need to use the washroom throughout the day without consistent reminders from a teacher.
- Child is no longer wearing pull-ups/diapers all day, including during nap time.
- Child is comfortable using a toilet – not only a potty for both pee and bowel movements.
- Child is able to wait for a reasonable amount of time before using the washroom without having an accident.
- Child is able to pull pants/underwear up and down independently.
- Child is able to or starting to wipe independently.
- Child may still experience infrequent accidents (no more than 1-2 per week) but is able to change themselves if an accident happens.
- If a child is having consistent accidents and/or BM accidents after the first 2 months in our classroom, they will be asked to temporarily withdraw until toilet training has progressed further.

## 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. Regular fees are charged for all listed holidays, Professional Development Days and unplanned school closures to ensure we are able to continue paying our staff and other expenses required to run the school.

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.

**Our School closes for the months of July and August each year and no tuition is collected for these months.**

## 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 local schoolboards-DSBN and/or 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, 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 school. On arrival, a staff will greet you and your child at the door. At pick-up, a staff will dismiss your child to you either at the door of the classroom or from outside. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the registration form.

Due to space restrictions, and for the safety of all families, we ask that everyone parks in the DSBN Academy parking lot and uses the walkway to the right of our playground to access the Casa building. There are a couple reserved spaces for families with infants, elderly or otherwise unable to walk from the DSBN – please use these only if needed. **(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.

#### Casa

Parents are requested to park in the DSBN Academy School parking lot and use the walkway alongside our playground to get to the school. Escort your child (ren) to the main doors of school (under the carport).

#### Toddler

Parents are requested to park in the school parking lot, or on local streets. Escort your child (ren) to the main doors of school (under overhang). When exiting, please stay on high alert for others entering and exiting the building.

**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 the building to pick up your child or greet your child at the playground gate when children are outside. This will be a good time to check the bulletin board, catch a glimpse of your child in the classroom setting, connect with your child's teacher, 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!

## **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 – use clear and concise language when giving directions.
- 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 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 (free from hard buttons, buckles, etc), comfortable, and washable.
- Labeled with his/her name or 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, etc.
- Giving them a chance to express themselves without jumping in to finish their sentence.
- Answering their many questions.

## When You Bring Your Children to School:

- Bring them to the door, say goodbye and leave as you normally would. Please do not linger, as this makes it confusing for the child and they can become upset. They will be greeted by one of the teachers and directed to their tasks for the day.
- Discourage them from bringing favourite 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. 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 age-appropriate choices.

## 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 instead of doing it for them. 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 whiteboard in the front entrance, and your child's basket regularly for important information.
4. A school bag for shoes and extra clothes will be supplied. Please send it 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 outerwear 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/put on any outerwear and hang up their belongings on their hook instead of doing this for them. Say goodbye to your child at the door. 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, whiteboards and monthly calendars for important information. Also, there may be times when we will send an e-mail or Remind App message with information from either the school or board.
3. A school bag for shoes, extra cloths, and artwork will be supplied to each child in their first year of school. Please send it to school daily. **This schoolbag is to be used for their full 3 years in Casa.**
4. Classroom observation is one day per week. If you wish to see your child in the classroom setting, please sign up for a timeslot. Limit is one family per session. Up to two adults may attend. Observations take place after Thanksgiving until 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 outerwear 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 honour. 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.

Your child is invited to bring a picture of each year of their life starting from birth if available. 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. Your child is also invited to bring their favourite book to share at circle.

**\*\*Please note that food or special treats are not allowed to come into the school for a child's birthday. Please save these things for home.**

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

**\*\*Please let us know if you are not receiving any emails from the school after checking your junk folder.**

## **5- Health and Safety**

# Nutrition and Medications

## Nutrition

Nelephant offers a catered lunch program for all full-day children. We also provide 2 small snacks for the children each day – 1 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon.

**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:**

**([https://mabelslabels.ca/en\\_CA/fundraising/support/](https://mabelslabels.ca/en_CA/fundraising/support/)) – 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 complete the appropriate forms in the Parent Portal on our website BEFORE arriving at school.\*\***

Your child should stay home if:

- They had any **VOMITING or DIARRHEA**. They may not return to school until **48 hours** after the last incident without the use of medication.
- **HAND FOOT AND MOUTH** – It is our school’s policy that children stay home for a minimum of 1 full week from the onset of symptoms and until all blisters are healing – scabbed over.
- **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** – New or worsening cough, especially 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, an Absence Report 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 Waitlist Policy**

Children are admitted to the Toddler Class between the ages of 18 months to 2 years, except under extenuating circumstances.

Children are admitted to the Casa Class between the ages of 2.8 and 3.5, except under extenuating circumstances. Senior Kindergarten aged children are encouraged to attend the full-day program. Other children wishing full day are assessed on an individual basis and admission is subject to space availability.

**The following are eligible for admission to the school subject to meeting the school's policy:**

1. Children ages 18 months to 3 years for Toddler and 2.8 to 5 years who are fully toilet-trained (**Casa Classes only**) who are on the waitlist and pay the required fees as stated in the current year's Fee Schedule and abide by the school Policies and Procedures.
2. February 1 is the last day for admission in that school year for both Casa and Toddler classes, except under extenuating circumstances.
3. No children under the age of 3 years (Casa Classes only) will be enrolled after January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, except under extenuating circumstances.

The first step in the Admissions process is to join the Nelephant waitlist.

### **Waitlist Procedure**

Nelephant Montessori School will not charge parents a fee or a deposit for the placement of their child (ren) on a waiting 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. Provide information about their family on the Waitlist Form.

### **Subsequently**

3. Child (ren) will be placed on the waitlist.
4. No fee or deposit will be charged to be placed on the waitlist.
5. The Head of School, Toddler Supervisor or designate will contact the family when a space becomes available in either the Casa or Toddler class to begin the Admissions Procedure.
6. Families will be offered admission from the waitlist based on the criteria outlined in the Nelephant Admissions procedure.
7. Information will only be accessed by the Head of School, Toddler Supervisor and Office Administrator to ensure confidentiality.
8. A child's (ren's) position on the waitlist will be verbally communicated at a parent's request through the office.
9. A child may be removed from the waitlist for the following reasons:
  - a. Parents do not respond within 3 days after being offered a space.
  - b. Parents have indicated they do not wish to complete the entire 3-year Casa program.
  - c. A child is too old to begin in our program.

- d. Parents do not respond to periodically sent emails inquiring if they wish to remain on the waitlist.

## Admissions Procedure

Once a space is available, the school will contact parents from the waitlist and initiate the following events:

- 1- Complete the "All About Me" form.
- 2- A tour of the school.
  - a. Parents and child
  - b. Walk through of the classrooms, and explanation of the areas of the classroom as well as our program.
  - c. Parents are given a document about our school and the Montessori Philosophy.
- 3- Parents observe our program – 20-30 minutes without their child.
  - a. Speak with Head of School/Toddler Supervisor or designate after to answer any questions.
- 4- Casa-aged children will come for a short visit in the classroom during a morning work cycle. Typically done while Parents observe in the other classroom.
  - a. Parents to be at the school the entire time.
- 5- Parents will receive a Letter of Acceptance and an Enrollment Form.
  - a. Children will be accepted based on the following criteria:
    - i. Current Nelephant child wishing to re-enroll for another year.
      1. *A Toddler child transitioning to Casa whose sibling previously did not complete the Casa program may only be offered a half-day Casa space, regardless of their current enrollment type in Toddler.*
    - ii. Siblings of Nelephant students who completed the full program.
    - iii. Families looking for a Montessori program and planning to complete the 3-year Casa program. Priority may be given to children transferring from another Montessori program.
    - iv. Classroom dynamics:
      1. Balance of ages.
      2. Children with previous Montessori experience (if transferring from another school, Nelephant requires information from that school before acceptance.)
      3. A balance of abilities and personalities to ensure proper support is available for all children in the class.
    - v. Toddler children need to be walking and able to feed themselves independently.
    - vi. Casa children are fully toilet trained.
      - o What toilet trained looks like in the Casa classroom:
        - Child can independently recognize the need to use the washroom throughout the day without consistent reminders from a teacher.
        - Child is no longer wearing pull-ups/diapers all day, including during nap time.

- Child is comfortable using a toilet – not only a potty for both pee and bowel movements.
- Child is able to wait for a reasonable amount of time before using the washroom without having an accident.
- Child is able to pull pants/underwear up and down independently.
- Child is able to or starting to wipe independently.
- We understand and accept that young children may still experience infrequent accidents. If this happens, the child should be able to independently change themselves. We will offer the child support and encouragement.

- 6- A space is reserved once the Enrollment Form is completed and the Enrollment Fee is paid. Once paid, the Enrollment Fee is non-refundable regardless of absence, transfer, or withdrawal.
- 7- Parents will complete the Full Registration Package in the Spring. All information MUST be completed in full prior to the child starting school. Failure to do so will delay the start date.
- 8- Parents and child will attend an orientation meeting for new families with classroom teachers at the end of August.

\*\* After receiving the Letter of Acceptance and the Enrollment Form, parents will have five (5) days to fulfill enrollment requirements in order to reserve that position. If time expires, and enrollment requirements have not been met, then the next family on the waiting list will be notified for the same opening(s).

**A Parent Handbook will be provided to all families prior to beginning school.**

## **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.

## **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.

The accommodation of a child requires participation, co-operation, open communication and commitment from the parents/guardians as well as from the school. We must work as a team and come together to find solutions for both school and the home environment that will best support the child.

The first month of entry into the school is a period of trial and transition for every child. Most children transition easily and quickly settle into their new environment. If your child experiences difficulty (behaviour that impacts the wellbeing of others, themselves or the environment) during this period of trial, we will work with you and your child to try to resolve the situation. If no resolution is reached, Nelephant reserves the right to ask you to find alternative programming.

We have many things in place to help a child successfully integrate into our program, including:

- 1- A New Parent Orientation Session for parents to help you set your child up for success.
- 2- Staggered start dates for all new children, so they have more one-on-one time on their first day of school.
- 3- A list of preliminary activities. This ensures all children are introduced to work that allows them the opportunity to start building an independent work cycle.
- 4- One-on-one lessons for children with a teacher who is specially trained in the Montessori pedagogy.
- 5- Lesson planning for each individual child rather than the whole class, based on observations of their skills and development.
- 6- Partnering with our Niagara Region Inclusion Quality Coordinator (IQC) who works alongside teachers to identify children who need more intensive or specialized support and with families to connect them to community services in our region.
- 7- Completing a Speech and Language Checklist with all our children under the age of 4 each year in order to make referrals to trained Speech Pathologists if more assistance is needed.
- 8- Completing the CARE checklist with children under the age of 4 on an as needed basis, which can lead to making a referral to a Behaviour Consultant through Pathstone Mental Health.

The following are examples of the steps that will be followed when a child is struggling during the adjustment period:

- 1- Teachers to complete written observations of the child.
- 2- Teachers to request a colleague's observation.
- 3- Colleague completes an observation (either another teacher, the Toddler Supervisor or Head of School).
- 4- IQC observes and suggests a referral to be switched from Tier 1 to Tier 2 if needed.
- 5- Teachers and IQC meet to discuss observations.
- 6- Teachers to request a meeting with the parents.
- 7- Teachers will complete the Speech checklist, and/or the CARE checklist.
  - a. If a referral is recommended, parents are required to complete the referral in order to allow teachers to access further support required to best accommodate the child in the classroom.
- 8- Schedule a follow-up meeting with the parents to discuss progress or next steps.

# Dismissal Procedure

## Dismissal

Nelephant Montessori is a family-oriented community based on respect. Respect for yourself. Respect for others and the community. Respect for the environment. All members of the Nelephant Montessori community - staff, board members, students and parents - are responsible for behaving in a respectful manner towards one another and for promoting respect in and for our school. When a family's behaviour does not align with the values of mutual respect and collaboration upheld by the Nelephant community, or when their actions contribute to an unsafe or hostile work environment for staff, the school reserves the right to discontinue the family's enrolment.

Nelephant may terminate services and have a child(ren) withdrawn from the school if policies and procedures are not followed, fees have not been paid, or the administration and/or Parent Board Executive request withdrawal for just cause.

### **Other reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to:**

- 1- Failure to pay required fees on time.
- 2- Policies and procedures are not followed.
- 3- A child who consistently arrives late (after 9am) without previously coming to an agreement with the Toddler Supervisor/Head of School, or a child who is consistently picked up late (after 11:30am/4pm).
- 4- When referrals are recommended based upon the results of screening or educator and IQC observations and parents refuse to allow the school to access additional support for their child.
- 5- A Casa child who is not fully toilet trained and continues to have accidents consistently after the first month adjustment period. Frequent accidents require significant staff attention, taking them away from supervising and teaching the other children in the classroom. In this instance, the dismissal can be temporary until such time that the child is fully toilet trained with the condition that full fees continue to be paid.
- 6- A child who displays a persistent pattern of behaviour that the school determines poses a safety risk, significantly disrupts the learning environment, or cannot be adequately supported within the program's resources and expertise, and who the school determines to show no improvement despite consistent and documented intervention.

Examples of behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- persistent unsafe or boundary-related behaviours, including hitting, kicking, biting, or repeated body exploration
- repeatedly attempting to leave the classroom/group,
- deliberately and repeatedly destroying classroom materials or other children's work,
- using persistent threatening language toward other children or staff

Before considering dismissal, the school will document incidents and interventions, meet with the family to develop consistent strategies, provide recommendations for additional support when appropriate, and explore all reasonable modifications to support the child's success over a reasonable period (typically 4-6 weeks), except where serious or immediate safety concerns require more urgent action.

The balance of the unused annual school fees from the date of dismissal will be refunded, excluding any non-refundable fees already paid and less any monies owing to Nelephant Montessori.

## **Withdrawal**

We understand that at times there may be a need to withdraw a child before the end of the school year. In that situation, written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given at least one (1) month in advance. The month is exclusive of the existing calendar month currently attending. 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 the child's start date, and all deposits and non-refundable fees are forfeited.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed when there is a temporary withdrawal of a child i.e., an extended vacation, unless full fees continue to be paid.

## **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 under the age of 30 months 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. This is only required in our Toddler Program, as all Casa children are older than 30 months.

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. Second- and Third-year aged Casa children will participate in quiet activities in the classroom to start their afternoon, unless a nap is requested by parents.

## **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 between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm each day, weather permitting.

### **Half-Day Program**

Outdoor play time is not always possible as these children are only at school for up to 3 hours a day.

### **Toddler Program**

Two hours of outdoor play time is available for all full-day children between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm 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 teaching staff and approved by the Head of School 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, bags, juice containers, utensils 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 “treat” type foods such as chips and candy.
- 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 lunchtime. 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 wellbeing 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 monthly along with a check of all fire exits, emergency lighting, and extinguishers 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, bags, juice containers, utensils, 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".
- 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.
- 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 exceling 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 (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;
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will; or
- g) sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or engaging in a prescribed sexual act, as those terms are defined in the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007. O. Reg. 137/15, s. 48; O. Reg. 126/16, s. 34; O. Reg. 197/26, s. 15.

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, and or Toddler Supervisor will complete the Compliance Management Observation Forms for each staff on a semi-annual basis and annually 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.

The Toddler 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 an observation time in their child's class.
- 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 highchair, 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.
- 7- Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and prescribed sexual acts (as defined under the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007).

## **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.

# **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 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.

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.

**Note:** If a staff member is directly involved or allegations are against them, they may be required to stay away from the premises for a period of time while investigations take place.

## **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**

## **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.

**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. In some cases, a more complex issue may result in a temporary pause in care for your child until the school or Board is able to complete the necessary investigation, or until consultation with human resources or legal counsel can take place.

At any time during the process the family or school 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, Toddler Supervisor or Head of School 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.**

# Safe Arrival and Dismissal

## Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at school as expected, as well as steps to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

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

## Policy

### General

Nelephant will ensure that any child receiving care at the school is only released to the child's parents/guardians or individuals that the parents/guardians have provided written authorization to whom the school may release the child to.

Nelephant will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The school will not release any children from care without supervision.

Where a child does not arrive at school as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

## Procedures

### Accepting a child into school

1. When accepting a child into school at the time of drop-off, a staff member must:
  - greet the parent/guardian and child.
  - ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the Registration Form or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
  - document the change in pick-up procedure in the Communication Book.
  - sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

### **Where a child has not arrived in care as expected**

1. Where a child does not arrive at the school and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., submitted an absence report, left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
  - Inform the Head of School, Toddler Supervisor, Administrative Assistant or designate and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 9:30am.

- One of those staff will send a message on the Remind App to the child's parent/guardian. If no response is received within 30 minutes, then a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian. If there is no answer, a voicemail will be left asking the parent/guardian to contact the school.
- 2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence will be added in the Communication Book.

### **Releasing a child from care**

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the school may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
  - confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
  - where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

### **Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)**

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up by 11:30am (for half-day children) or by 4:00pm (for full-day children) or by 5pm (Aftercare children), the child's teacher (or Aftercare teacher) or designate shall contact the parent/guardian by phone and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
  - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must leave a voicemail asking them to contact the school, and then will call the 2<sup>nd</sup> parent/guardian where possible. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the school.
  - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall contact the child's emergency contacts listed on their Registration Form until contact is made with an authorized individual. If no contact has been made by the time the school is closing, the staff will refer the procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and the school is closed".

### **Where a child has not been picked up and the school is closed**

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 5:05pm, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. The staff shall proceed with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall call the parent/guardian first, if no contact made, then proceed to call the authorized individual. The staff will leave a voicemail each time requesting the person contact the school immediately.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or the authorized individual, the staff will inform the Head of School or Toddler Supervisor prior to calling the emergency contacts.

4. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall call the emergency contacts listed on the child's Registration Form.
5. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 5:30pm, the staff shall proceed with contacting Family and Children's Services (FACS). Staff shall follow FACS's direction with respect to next steps.
  - Family and Children's Services: 905-937-7731

### **Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures**

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

### **Glossary**

*Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual:* a person that the parent/guardian has advised the school in writing can pick-up their child from care.

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

*Parent/guardian:* A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.