



THISTLEOAKS
Child Care Centre

PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised August 2016



THISTLEOAKS
Child Care Centre

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre

53 Bond Street
Oakville, ON
L6K 1L8

(905) 842-7303

Main Building

(905) 844-7864 ext 225

School Age Building

General Email: info@thistleoaks.ca

Website: www.thistleoaks.ca

Welcome to Thistleoaks Child Care Centre!

We are a child care centre for the children of employees of Central West Specialized Developmental Services and the Oakville Community.

We are a non-profit organization, operated by a volunteer Board of Directors and a paid Executive Director. We are licensed by the Ministry of Education and our operation is guided by the Child Care and Early Years Act. The license is posted in the sunroom and in the School Age room at Central West Specialized Developmental Services main building.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is located on the grounds of Central West Specialized Developmental Services, a residential facility for developmentally handicapped individuals. This is their home and the residents are free to use the grounds. For safety purposes, please drive slowly and obey all traffic signs.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is a facility for children and families to learn, grow, explore and create. We believe in team work and as a part of Thistleoaks, we want you to feel like part of our team. Our goal is to nurture each individual child in a safe, warm, caring and education focused environment. Your suggestions, support and ideas are valued and always welcome.

Our handbook will provide information that relates to our Child Care Centre and programs. If you should require any further information about Thistleoaks, please feel free to contact our Executive Director

Thistleoaks Philosophy

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre provides a warm and caring atmosphere to nurture the growth of the total child. Children thrive in a snug, secure and stimulating environment. We provide this special atmosphere to all children.

The teachers offer a flexible program, which promotes the children's sense of belonging and self-confidence, while recognizing their individual needs. The children are exposed to a variety of activities in large and small groups. Activities are geared to each child's age and stage of development to promote emotional, intellectual, physical and social growth.

We offer an integrated program for children with extra support needs. A Resource Consultant from the Region of Halton works with centre staff to provide support and individual program plans.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre Policy

We believe that every child is to be respected as an individual and as a member of the group. Our goal is to meet each child's needs and interests to ensure optimal growth. We appreciate your cooperation in reporting anything that could affect your child's behavior. (ie. Change in eating, sleeping patterns, fears, crisis at home...)

Our "Open Door" policy encourages parent and guardians to drop in at any time during operating hours. We encourage parents to become involved with Thistleoaks by volunteering in their areas of expertise.

Program Statement

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre offers a learning program that is consistent with the Ministry of Education policies, pedagogy and curriculum. Some of the Ministry documents we reference in our program include the following:

- *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*
- *Ontario Early Years Framework*
- *Ontario Early Learning Framework*
- *Think Feel Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children*

We know that children learn best by pursuing their personal interests and goals, so by following the Emergent Curriculum children are able to make their own choices about materials and activities during program time. As they pursue their choices and plans, children explore, ask and answer questions, solve problems, and interact with peers, program staff, students and other adults.

Children are competent, curious, and rich in potential

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre recognizes that each child is a unique individual who brings his or her own abilities to the program and deserves the encouragement and space to try new things, explore new ideas, and develop their own unique creativity.

We provide an environment that promotes curiosity and exploration. We believe every child deserves a safe and caring environment in which they will grow and develop to their maximum potential.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre understands the importance of children's stages of development. For each child, their stage of development is individualized. Contributing factors include their unique family, community and life experiences. We aim to integrate all areas of child development in our program.

Our goals for children include the following:

- Every child has a sense of belonging and is connected to others and contributes to the world
- Every child is developing a sense of self, health and well being
- Every child is an active and engaged learner, who explores with body, mind and senses
- Every child is a capable communicator who expresses themselves in many ways

Our Programs are designed to:

- Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self regulate
- Promote the children's exploration, play and inquiry
- Provide child initiated and adult supported experiences
- Offer opportunities to create genuine relationships with others in the program

Types of Activities we offer daily include:

- Drama, music, dance and visual arts
- Language and literacy
- Nature, science and technology
- Construction and design
- Daily opportunities for active outdoor play
- Rest and quiet time for children who require it

Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-Being of Children.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre understands that the first step in establishing and nurturing health, safety and well-being for children in our program is through the connections they make with the program staff, volunteers and students on placement. Each child is given individual attention during the day and special attention when s/he needs it by our educators who are consistent and gentle. Each group is comprised of children who are developmentally at the same age.

As a licensed centre, Thistleoaks Child Care Centre meets and exceeds all health and safety requirements by the Ministry of Education and local government bylaws. Health and Safety

information is posted outside of each classroom on the communication boards and policies such as, "Anaphylaxis Policy" are available in our Parent Handbook.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre follows Canada's Food Guide to develop our menus. Menus always include a fruit and/or vegetable, milk and/or water, whole grains and low to no sugar. We accommodate dietary or religious food requirements for the children in our program and menus can be viewed on our website and/or the classroom communication boards.

Relationships among children, families, staff, and community partners

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre strives to promote a sense of belonging for children and their families by creating positive interactions and collaboration of families. We understand that relationships of trust are the basis of learning and cooperation.

Every child is entitled to be given the opportunity to develop personal responsibility and social skills, to learn to problem solve, develop conflict resolution skills and to learn about diversity and inclusion.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is committed to working in partnership with community partners, as we work together on the mutual goal of providing the best possible child care service to families.

Positive self expression, communication and self regulation

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre programming leads to children's sense of belonging. We provide positive learning environments and experiences, focused on play based learning, encourage children's communication, self expression and self regulation.

In our inclusive learning environments, we welcome children of all abilities. Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion is fundamental for development and learning.

Here are some of the ways that we create an inclusive environment in our programs:

- We recognize each child as having equal rights to participate in program activities
- We recognize and respect the unique qualities of each child and family, including ancestry, culture, ethnicity, race, language, gender, religion, family environment, and developmental needs.
- We create strategies that value the culture and first language of all children.
- We establish program strategies, to promote an inclusive learning environment in which every child can participate.
- We view the diversity of children and families as an asset, and plan programs to reflect differences and enrich the environment

Our programs focus on play based learning as the way that children naturally learn best. It is their natural response to the environment around them. When children are manipulating objects, acting out roles, or experimenting with different materials, they engage in learning through play. Play allows them to actively construct, challenge, and expand their own understanding through making connections to prior experiences, opening the door to new learning. Intentional play base learning enables children to investigate, ask questions, solve

problems, and engage in critical thinking. Play is responsive to each child's unique learning style. It capitalizes their curiosity and creativity.

Our program also supports children's self regulation, their ability to deal with stress and remain alert and ready to learn. When children are calmly focused and alert, they are best able to control their emotions, pay attention, and ignore distractions, inhibit their impulses and understand the consequences of their actions.

Parent engagement and interaction

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre encourages and practices open communication with families about our program and their children's learning experiences. We believe that families are experts on their children. Sharing knowledge is important to your child's success.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre ensures that families have the support of available, affordable, safe, reliable, high quality licensed child care for their children, which ensures parents piece of mind while their children are in our program. Values of respect, care, empathy, trust and integrity are ensured in our interactions with families. In addition to daily interaction with program staff, we offer many opportunities for parent feedback and involvement such as, open houses, weekly program emails, monthly newsletters and parent interviews.

We know that our partnerships with families help our program meet the needs of the children:

- Families form the foundation of a child's early development
- Families know their children best and are the most powerful influence on learning and development
- The needs of each child are considered in the context of their family composition, values, culture and language. This approach enriches relationships between our centre, families, and our community.
- Parent involvement connects to their children's early development, and enhances child learning

Community partners

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is committed to involving local community partners and to engaging those partners in supporting our centre's children, family and staff. We support volunteers and students from the community and provide placement, training, learning opportunities and practical work experience in the areas of programming and management. Volunteers and students on placement enhance the high-quality care and individual attention given to the children within our program

Supporting staff in continuous professional learning

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is committed to hiring, training and fairly compensating staff. We hire staff that have a positive and sensitive attitude towards children. Our non-discriminatory hiring practices provide individuals of all backgrounds the opportunity for employment. We believe that everyone has worth and value and that all staff are entitled to be respected, supported and treated fairly.

A large majority of our full time staff has completed the early childhood education program and is registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. All program staff attend mandatory

professional meetings and are committed to continuous professional learning. Thistleoaks Child Care Centre participates in Quality First within Halton – an initiative for quality improvement. Thistleoaks Child Care Centre staff foster children’s inquiry and creativity by planning on a daily basis based on the observations that they make on the children’s interests. In this way, learning is extended, leading to deeper investigation with materials and environment. Staff plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development will be supported.

Documenting and reviewing the impact of our learning program

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre understands that pedagogical documentation is a way for our program staff to learn about how the children think and learn. Our staff make daily observations of the children in the program and uses information for future planning. The purpose of our documentation:

- A way to value children’s experiences and help them reflect on those experiences
- An opportunity to make children’s learning and understanding of the world visible- to themselves, to other children, to their families, to the program staff.
- A reflection on developmental growth
- A process for staff to co-plan with children about learning
- A dialogue with families about children’s learning experiences
- A self reflection opportunity for staff as they participate in continuous learning.

Prohibited Disciplinary Practices:

The following policy is as stated in the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA-8.1-8.5) ‘48’

1. No Operator shall permit,
 - Corporal punishment of the child;
 - Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the children 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;
 - Locking the exits or the child care centre premises for the purpose of confining the children 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;
 - Use of harsh or degrading measure 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;
 - Depriving the children of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, bedding; or
 - Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

Admission

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is a licensed child care centre for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 12 years of age. We admit children in the following programs:

Program	Children	Ratio	Age
Infant	10	1:3	6wks – 18mos
Toddler	15	1:5	18mos – 30mos
Junior	15	1:5	18mos – 30mos
Intermediate	16	1:8	2.5yrs – 4yrs
Senior	16	1:8	2.5yrs – 4yrs
Kindercare	20	1:13	4yrs – 5yrs
Kinderclub	23	1:13	4.5yrs – 6yrs
School Age – Before School	15	1:15	6yrs – 12yrs
School Age – After School	60	1:15	6yrs – 12yrs

In addition, we provide full day care for School Aged and Kindergarten aged children during professional development days and all school holidays, including Camp during the summer months.

Parents/guardians are required to complete the forms provided in the registration package in full prior to attending the program.

General Information

Hours of Operation

Thistleoaks main centre is open all year from 6:45am – 6:16pm, Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

Please note, the School Age program closes at 6:00pm daily.

Statutory Holidays

There is no fee reduction for statutory holidays. This pertains to the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Fee

Fees are based on the number of days for which your child is enrolled. Invoices are distributed within the first week at the beginning of each month, for that month. Your child's teacher will distribute invoices. **Methods of payment are either cash or cheque and are due by the 20th** of each month unless parents make alternative arrangements with the Executive Director. An alternative option is automatic withdrawal from your bank account on either the 15th or the 30th of the month or having the payment split between each date. Tax receipts are issued by the end of February.

No reductions in fees are made to parents for statutory holidays, family vacations, illness or emergency closures. Missed days may not be exchanged. Children attend the days for which they are registered.

Parents will be charged the rate for the group in which their child is enrolled. If the child cannot be moved to their appropriate age group within 3 months, the next group rate will be charged. If you wish to change the days that your child is enrolled, please inform the office ***in writing*** with 30 days notice. We will try to accommodate changes to arrangements, with written notice.

Late Fee

The centre opens at 6:45am and closes at 6:15pm. We would appreciate it if you would pick up your child by 6:00pm allowing you time to obtain any information, dress your child and depart by 6:15pm. Parents leaving the centre after 6:15pm will be charged a late fee of \$15 for every 15 minutes or part thereof.

Fee Structure

The Board of Directors reviews the child care fees at least annually. These fees are subject to change generally on the first day of September each year, but may be changed more often.

Professional Development Days

Children enrolled in elementary school will be automatically enrolled in all professional development days and school holidays (excluding summer holidays). Parents/guardians will be charged the PD rate unless the office is notified in writing two weeks prior to the PD day that they will not require care. If notification is given, then the regular rate for that child's enrollment will be applied.

Arrival and Departure

Always make sure that the teacher in attendance is aware of your child's arrival and departure. We cannot accept responsibility for children who are not inside the classroom or playground. If possible, spend a few minutes sharing information as this helps make transition easier. All parents are required to sign their children in and out. For your information, staff record your child's daily eating, sleeping and toileting information (where appropriate). This information is kept in the program communication binder located on the parent counter in the sunroom or in your child's room.

A keypad is located at the entrances of the main building. You will be given the code upon admission of your child. The code may change from time to time. A door bell is located by the keypad door for visitors.

Emergency Evacuation

In case of an emergency evacuation, Thistleoaks staff will take the children to Central West Specialized Developmental Services gym. Parents will be contacted and are expected to pick up their children at this location.

Release of Children – Emergencies or Alternate Arrangements

In an emergency, you may enlist someone other than yourself to pick up your child. This person must be at least 18 years of age or older. We must be advised and be able to identify the person you have authorized. We will ask for photo identification to verify the individual at pick up, as your child will NOT be released to an unauthorized person. We require the names, addresses, telephone numbers and child's relationship to the adults to wish to authorize and this must be listed on our admission form at the time of registration, along with your consent signature. Please advise us of any changes.

Discharge

The parents provide **written** notice of withdrawal, **one month in advance**. Parents are required to pay to the end of this notice period. Thistleoaks may terminate service, with written notice, if policies are not followed or fees are not paid.

Procedure:

1. Parents/guardians submit a written withdrawal notice to the Executive Director.
2. Parents/guardians pay child care fees to the end of the one month notice period.
3. The Executive Director may discharge children if payment is irregular.

Inclement Weather Policy

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre recognizes it's responsibility for the safety and welfare of our students and staff during centre hours; understands that clients share in the responsibility for the safety and welfare of their children; realizes occasionally situations of severe inclement weather exist or are predicted during the operational hours of the centre; and recognizes that Thistleoaks Child Care Centre on certain occasions, may have to close the centre.

Every effort will be made to keep the centre open on scheduled days, however, due to severe weather conditions; we may be forced to close. In the event where Thistleoaks' closure may be possible or predicted, advance notification will be given to clients via communication through staff and notices posted on all entrance doors to the centre.

The decision to close will be made by the Executive and/or Assistant Directors. Should the centre close prior to operational hours, communication via our website (www.thistleoaks.ca) and outgoing voicemail will be updated by 6:30am on the day of severe weather conditions.

Only when the most severe conditions are predicted or occur, the centre may close during operational hours. This decision will be made by 11am by the Executive and/or Assistant Directors. Communication to clients will be completed by 12 noon with a closure time of the centre being 3pm. Notification of this closure can be found on our website and outgoing voicemail. Clients picking their children up after 3pm will be charged our late fee rate of \$1 per minute.

Clients will not be reimbursed for days missed due to severe weather conditions and/or closures.

Sunscreen

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre supplies sunscreen for all children. A permission form needs to be signed in order for us to apply centre provided sunscreen to your child. If you would prefer to provide your own, please label the sunscreen and inform your child's teacher. Sunscreen is not applied to children under 6 months of age. During the summer, we ask that you please apply sunscreen to your child prior to arriving at Thistleoaks Child Care Centre. We will reapply sunscreen during the day. SPF 30 is recommended.

Clothing

You child's safety is our #1 concern, therefore, please send your child in closed toe, rubber heeled shoe (ie. Running shoes) Label garments with child's name or initials. Please provide your child with a handing bag, extra shoes or slippers and a complete change of clothes suitable to the weather.

- Summer clothing includes a sun hat, bathing suit and towel. Open toe sandals/flip flops/crocs are not permitted as outdoor footwear.
- Winter clothing includes a hat, two pairs of heavy mittens, boots and a warm snow suit.
- Spring/Fall clothing is to be transitional weather clothing, including rubber boots, hat, splash pants and a jacket suitable to the weather.

Meals

You child will be served a nutritious morning, lunch and afternoon snack. Menus are posted online, outside the kitchen and outside of each classroom on their information board. Please do not bring **ANY** outside food into the building.

Please inform us of all allergies and food requests. Allergies are posted in each classroom and in the kitchen. Thistleoaks will attempt to accommodate special food requirements (ie. For allergies or cultural reasons, like Halal)

Children enrolled in School Aged camp, provide their own morning snack and lunch. Afternoon snack will be provided by the centre. Please pack a healthy and nutritious lunch. We encourage you to be creative; don't forget to include a variety of fruits and vegetables.

NO PEANUT PRODUCTS OR OTHER NUT PRODUCTS ARE PERMITTED AT THISTLEOAKS CHILD CARE CENTRE DUE TO SERIOUS ALLERIGIES.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis (anna-fill-axis) is a serious allergic reaction. It can be life threatening. Food is the most common cause of anaphylaxis, but insect stings, medicine, latex or exercise can also cause a reaction. The commonest food allergens are peanuts, tree nuts, seafood, egg and milk products. Anaphylaxis affects multiple body systems: skin, upper and lower respiratory, gastro-intestinal and cardiovascular. Anaphylactic shock is an explosive overreaction of the body's immune system to a triggering agent (allergen). It can be characterized by swelling, difficulty breathing, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, circulatory collapse, coma and death.

Symptoms of anaphylactic shock tend to develop rapidly, although the initial presentation can be delayed and/or deceptively mild. The victim may become uneasy, upset and red in the face. They may also develop a rapid heartbeat, prickling and itchiness in the skin, hives, throbbing in the ears, sneezing, coughing and difficulty breathing. Shock may then follow, in which blood vessels become leaky, blood pressure falls and the person becomes cold, clammy and faint.

Anaphylaxis Policy

This policy provides direction to parents, staff and administrators to help minimize and reduce the risks for those who are identified as being susceptible to anaphylaxis due to individual allergy conditions. The intent of this policy is to develop a safe learning and working environment for all persons with allergies and special medical conditions. In this policy, you will find the following:

- A strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents
- A communication play for the provision of information on life-threatening allergies, including anaphylactic allergies
- An individual plan for each child with special health concerns, including anaphylactic allergies
- Third party training for the individual procedures of each child with anaphylactic concerns

Anaphylaxis Procedure

Strategy

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is a nut free centre. We do not serve products that knowingly contain or have come in contact with nuts or any nut product. To help us achieve this, we ask that no food be brought into the centre.

All allergies will be listed in a common area in the classroom. Should children require an *Individual Care Plan*, it will be noted on the allergy sheet. Three copies of this plan will be made. One copy will be kept in the classroom attendance binder that stays with the teacher at all times, the other with any medication that needs to be administered (if necessary) and the third in a main binder in the office.

Communication Plan/Individual Care Plan

All students, parents, staff and volunteers of Thistleoaks Child Care Centre that have medical concerns including anaphylaxis will complete an Individual Care Plan form. This information will be provided upon enrollment/hiring and updated with the teachers and office administration as conditions change.

The Individual Care Plan will be reviewed annually and when the child graduates to the next classroom of whichever is sooner. This plan includes current treatment, medication information and location, signs and symptoms, as well as a current emergency contact list and training documentation.

Staff will post a photo of any child with a life threatening allergy and inform the cook in the kitchen of any and all allergies and alert them when it changes.

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to inform and supply and/or part time staff and/or volunteers of the children's health and allergy concerns as they enter the classroom.

Third Party Training

It is the obligation of the child's parent/guardian to ensure that the information in the student's file be kept up to date and that staff is trained in administering the medication and first aid procedures for their child. This will be documented on the Individual Care Plan. In the event that a parent is not able to train a staff, a third party such as a public health nurse or physician will be acceptable.

Staffs are preauthorized to administer medication in response to an anaphylactic reaction when the school has up to date information on the child's individual treatment as well as signed consent from the parent or guardian.

If a staff member has reason to believe that a child is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction, the staff may administer an auto injector or other medication prescribed to the child for the treatment of an anaphylactic reaction, even if there is no preauthorization to do so.

We ask that parents provide 2 auto injectors when we are taking the children on field trips in the event that EMS response time is increased when we are off of Thistleoaks grounds. We ask that all staff, volunteers and parents read and abide by this policy. Its intention is not to segregate those children with special health concerns, but for us all to be an active part of prevention, treatment and understanding so that we can live happy and health lives without and undue risks.

High School Co-op and College Students

Thistleoaks supports our community by providing practical learning experiences. Staffs supervise students from ECE and ECA College and high school co-operative programs. These students are not counted in our ratios or are to be left alone with the children enrolled within the centre. All volunteers must provide a valid Police Check – Vulnerable Sector and sign off on all policies.

Toys from Home

Children may bring a toy from home for special planned activities. Your child's teacher will provide you with advance notice of such occasions. Otherwise, it is best to leave toys at home. This prevents toys being lost or broken for which the teachers are not responsible. Please do not allow your child to bring guns, war toys or other toys of destruction. This is discouraged at Thistleoaks.

Rest

All Toddler, Preschool and Kindercare children will rest for 1-2hours in the afternoon. They are not required to sleep but are requested to lie quietly on their cots. Children may bring a blanket and stuffed toy from home to be used during rest time.

Preschool children who do not fall asleep after the first hour are brought to the Flexi Room for our Early Risers program, which allows the children to participate in quiet activities for the final hour of the rest period.

All children have designated cribs/cots. Visual checks are done on ALL children throughout the rest period and documented accordingly

Infants 6wk-12yrs old will be placed on their back during sleep, following the Joint Statement of Safe Sleep. Should a parent request otherwise, a physician's note must recommend otherwise.

Central West Specialized Developmental Services: Grounds and Entrance

Please use the Kerr Street entrance only. The Bond Street entrance is only to be used if the Kerr Street entrance is blocked. Please stop at all stop signs. They are there to protect the residents and your children. *DRIVE SLOWLY.*

Please turn your car engine off and lock your car. Do not leave children unattended in your car. Please obey the NO PARKING SIGNS. If all the parking spaces are filled, please use the alternate lots located to the south of Thistleoaks.

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/guardian meetings are held with the teachers at a time that is convenient to the parent/guardian.

Thistleoaks hosts events such as our Annual General Meeting, Christmas Open House and JK/SK Information Evenings during the school year. These events are held after work hours, typically between 5:30 – 7:30pm.

Social nights may include a light meal and child care can be provided for any meeting portion of the night. This is a great time to meet other parents, relax, meet staff informally and learn more about our child care environment.

If the parking lot is full for these events, please park in the lots located to the south of Thistleoaks. Please do not park in a fire route.

Special Activities

The children occasionally leave the premises for walks or other activities. Please see the program sheet for details which will be posted in the classroom, as well as read any emails regarding such an event.

Children may visit local sites of interest that support the learning environment. We travel on local buses or First Student transportation. Special field trips will be posted for your information in advance. If you object to your child's participation, please speak to your child's teacher.

School Aged Children with Special Needs & Field Trips

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is a fully inclusive centre and all of our programs do their best to accommodate children of all needs. Thistleoaks Child Care Centre will attempt to provide a child who requires additional support, a Thistleoaks Staff while on an outing or field trip with one of our programs. However, we cannot guarantee that the centre will have a person to provide support in order for your child to attend the field trip. Should a staff member be provided a cost for this staff may be incurred for the parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are welcome to accept responsibility for providing a support person. Either themselves or any adult over the age of 18, as long as a current criminal reference check has been completed and the "Volunteer Support for Child(ren) with Special Needs" form have both been submitted to the office *prior* to the trip. This person will be solely responsible for the child and their needs throughout the course of the field trip. While the adult and child will participate fully in the field trip, neither adult nor child will be considered in our group ratio. Should no support person be provided by either centre or the parent/guardian, the child will not be permitted on the field trip due to immediate safety concerns for the child and other children within the program.

The program will be open for the child to attend before and/or after the field trip, with all information (date, times) posted well in advance for the parent/guardian.

Volunteering

If you would like to join your child's group on a field trip, you will have to review the centre's Behavior Guidance Policy as well as, get a Criminal Reference Check completed at the local police station. This "check" will cost you \$15 and can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks before it's completed by the police and ready for you to pick up.

Should you wish to join your child on a field trip, it would be in your best interest to get a Criminal Reference Check completed well in advance and have it submitted to the office. It will be kept on file for the duration of your child's enrollment here at the centre and act as valid proof for you to volunteer.

Oakville's Police Station Address:

2 District - 20 Division
95 Oak Walk Drive
Oakville, ON
L6H 0G6

Newsletters & Emails

All classrooms at Thistleoaks are equipped with their own email address. Parents/guardians will receive emails from their child's teachers twice weekly, in addition to an electronic monthly newsletter.

The bi-weekly emails will inform parents/guardians about the program, skills being learned, how support can be given at home, special events, current illnesses and teacher absenteeism. Staff may also forward on any other pertinent information regarding their class and/or the centre in separate emails for your review.

Newsletters are sent within the first few days of the month and are an overview of what has happened in the classroom and what will be focused on in the coming month.

Staff only have time to check emails twice a week, so please do not rely on emailing your child's teacher a secure method of communication should you have important messages to pass along. We encourage parents/guardians to speak directly with the teachers at either drop off or pick up and welcome phone calls any time.

Transportation

We provide transportation to 4 local schools for children enrolled in elementary school – Oakwood Public School, Morden Public School, St. James and Pinegrove Public (French Immersion). Parents/guardians requiring transportation services for the next school year are requested to submit notification of their transportation needs in writing by the end of June, should they not have already filled out a "Fall Planning Questionnaire".

When determining the bus route, we consider the length of time that each child spends on the bus. Therefore, unfortunately we cannot always service schools due to the length of the route. Transportation is contracted via First Student buses and drivers are NOT employees of Thistleoaks Child Care Centre. The drivers annually review and are to abide by our Behavior Guidance Policy.

Parents/guardians must notify the centre by 2:30 p.m. if your child will not be returning to the centre via First Student transportation. Continued failure in not notifying the Centre of a child's absence may result in the termination of transportation services.

The Centre will not accept or release children who are transported by taxi without a parent or guardian.

We will be transporting children to various outings both on First Student and local Oakville buses. Please review these seven bus safety rules with your child.

1. Obey the bus driver.
2. Walk as you get on and off the bus – don't run.

3. Keep the aisles clear of books and bags.
4. Talk quietly.
5. Keep your hands and head inside the windows.
6. Seat belts must be worn at all times (if available).
7. Stay in your seat.

Bus Safety Policy

Due to the safety and well being of children during transportation, we strictly enforce the bus safety rules and support the “pink slip” policy from First Student. If your child does not comply with the safe and appropriate behavior expected on the school bus, then the following procedure is followed.

If a child acts in an unsafe or inappropriate manner on the bus, then a white/pink slip will be issued.

- When one slip is issued, then the staff will meet with the child and parent/guardian to discuss the inappropriate behavior.
- When two slips are issued, then the child will not be allowed to ride on the bus for the next day. The child may attend the program but the parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting their child to and from the program.
- If three slips are issued, then a meeting with the Executive/Assistant Director is arranged to discuss whether continuing transportation service is a safe option.
- Transportation services can be terminated at the discretion of the Executive/Assistant Director if the safety and well being of the children using the bus is compromised.

Behavior Guidance

We realize that behavioral problems will occur from time to time. By using redirection and positive reinforcement, we modify the behavior, not the child. Initially, we look at the room, the program and then our individual response to the child’s behavior.

At no time shall a teacher, parent or guardian use corporal punishment on the child care premises or while representing Thistleoaks.

Parents/guardians who wish to reinforce our guidelines at home, can speak with their child’s teacher for more information.

Safe Environment Policy

Thistleoaks had the responsibility, in partnership with the student, family and community, to provide:

- A safe, positive and violence free environment for everyone in which respect and human dignity are valued
- And promote a sense of self worth and self discipline in the children
- And develop a primary prevention strategy and environment that stresses sociably, acceptable attitudes and effective social interpersonal skills

It is the intent of our policy:

For parents:

- To teach and instill good values
- Respect the right of others
- A sense of societal responsibility for their children and themselves
- To foster a safe and secure environment

For Children:

- To be respected in both person and beliefs
- To respect person, safety, property and rights of others
- To give respect and cooperation to all persons in positions of responsibility at Thistleoaks

Safe Environment Procedure

BEHAVIOR	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SUBSEQUENT OCCURRENCE
<p>DEFINITION:</p> <p><u>Assault</u> – the act or attempt to do physical harm</p> <p><u>Defiance of Authority</u> - persistent refusal to comply with persons in positions of authority</p> <p><u>Disorderly Conduct</u> – behavior that displays persistent opposition to authority, conduct injurious to the moral tone of the centre or to the well being of others in the centre</p>	<p>Letter informing parent/guardian & meeting with family. May result in suspension of child for one day depending on severity</p>	<p>Suspend child at discretion of Executive/Assistant Directors. A meeting will be held with the family before the child is able to return. Child may be discharged from the centre.</p>

Each situation is influenced by the child's age and their abilities. Child are directly responsible for their behavior to Thistleoaks' staff while at Thistleoaks or under our authority (ie. Bus field trips). The primary responsibility for young children's behavior always rests with the parent(s)/guardians.

Reference: Halton Board of Education Policy

Accident Form

An accident form will be completed by a staff member if your child obtains an injury while at Thistleoaks. If the injury is serious, we will immediately contact you and follow emergency procedures. If the injury is minor, we will administer first aid treatment and document the incident.

- The accident form is comprised of a carbon copy
- The staff member will document the incident, first aid treatment administered and further actions taken
- The Executive/Assistant Director or designate will review and sign the form. Parent/guardian will be asked to review and sign upon pick up, with a copy for them.

Smoking

There is **NO** smoking permitted at Thistleoaks or is you are representing Thistleoaks (ie. Field trips)

Health

A child can become ill, whether in child care or at home. When illness occurs among a group of children, the situation becomes more complicated. For example, the teacher(s) must decide what implications any illness has to the sick child, to the other children in care and to themselves. The parents feel torn between the demands of employment and the lack of alternatives for the sick child and the child may need special care during the course of the illness.

Please notify Thistleoaks if any information changes like health immunizations, address, telephone number, emergency contact person, job etc.

Health Policies

1. The medical/health information sheet, information forms and emergency card must be completed prior to child's entry into Thistleoaks Child Care Centre. This is in accordance with the CCEYA and Halton Regional Public Health Department. Thereafter, children are required to have their immunizations kept up to date.
2. Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief for exemption of immunizations must be completed by a doctor or nurse practitioner and must be notarized.
3. Communicable illnesses, suspected communicable illnesses or prolonged illnesses are to be reported to the teachers at Thistleoaks as soon as possible. We require a physician's note stating that you child is free from infectious or communicable disease before your child is allowed to return to the centre.
4. Children who appear ill do not attend the centre. We ask, as supported by the Public Health Department, that your child be kept at home if they have any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever or vomiting
 - Cough
 - Runny Nose, especially with green or yellow discharge
 - Diarrhea

And also displays sign of:

- Low activity level

- Decrease in appetite
- Need for more emotional support
- Sleepless nights
- Behavioral changes

These symptoms tell us that your child is NOT well.

We realize that some of the children will have been taken to the family doctor and either:

- Treatment has been prescribed
- No medication ordered, possible virus
- Cause unknown

You will be contacted to pick up your child immediately should one or more of the following symptoms appear while your child is here at the centre:

- **Fever of 101F or higher**
- **2 bouts of either vomiting or diarrhea**

We have found through our experience that the children's health improves more quickly if they remain at home 24-48 hours at this point. This also prevents other children in the centre from coming down with the same symptoms and reduces the amount of time that the children remain unhealthy.

Therefore, if your child is sent home with previously mentioned symptoms, s/he may not return to the centre on the next business day. Some cases may require the child to remain home longer to ensure symptoms are gone. You will be required to sign an "Ill Child Form" to confirm this.

We understand that there are a number of stresses for working parents. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to arrange for a reliable back-up person or plan for situations when you child is not well. We would appreciate your co-operation in this matter as our common goal is to have our children happy and healthy.

5. Prescription drugs are administered only when accompanied by the parent's written consent and instructions (ie. Administration of Drug & Medication authorization form). The drugs must be kept in the original, labeled containers and dated within the last month. Parents/guardians must sign the medical authorization form for each occasion. Medication can be placed in the locked First Aid cupboard (fridge or medication box) located by the office in the west building and the First Aid cupboard in the east building located by the cubby room.
6. We do not administer over the counter drugs unless for fever and MUST be accompanied by a physician's note. The note must state the child's name, name of medication (fever reducing or allergic reaction), dosage based on weight/age and reason (ie. Child's specific fever temperature if for fever or allergy symptoms).
7. Please note the waist pouches are permitted only in the School Age program for children to carry their own Epi-Pens and/or puffers for quicker access.
8. Please notify teachers of symptoms when your child is ill.

9. In case of accidental injury, you will be notified immediately. If necessary, your child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and accompanied by a staff member. Teachers will complete a full report if there is a head injury or other serious injury.
10. Please do not leave food, drink or medication in your child's cubby for safety, sanitary and food allergy reasons.
11. We use no medication such as Bactine, Polysporin, alcohol wipes or Vaseline for First Aid treatment. We only use soap and water, clean dry band-aids as needed and ice packs.

Welcome again to the Thistleoaks Family!

If you have any questions or comments regarding this handbook or about the centre as a whole, please feel free to approach the Executive/Assistant Director at any time.

We appreciate all the feedback we receive!

