



# Parent Handbook

## Before & After School Program

### Our Mission:

We strive to foster and support the growth and developmental interests of a well-balanced child. Providing children with the necessary tools to unravel hidden talents and explore new interests all the while supporting the development of fundamental values.

### How will we do it?

Our qualified staff and state of the art facility with a gymnasium & black box theatre and Dream Room allow for dynamic programming. Our week is comprised of a variety of Clubs (Monday to Thursday) and Free Fridays where student's choice may vary from week to week. Clubs consist of a either a mixed aged groups or age/grade specific.

Fridays - FREE choice: Students choose to participate either in free gym time or programmed arts or centre time in the Black Box Theatre.

Children explore new areas and develop new skills in our fun, supportive learning environment. Our goal is to assist in the development of the well-balanced child where they become comfortable trying new things and mastering new interests. In fostering the attitude of trying new things, we offer twelve (12) clubs throughout the week (choice of Two (2) to Three (3) daily) which are offered for 8 to 12 week sessions from 4 to 4:45PM. Clubs are free to registered students, with potentially a small charge per session for Clubs where students require their own supplies/food. There is a commitment of staying until 4:45 PM on club days for Drama, Glee & Dance. Some of the clubs change from session to session (Fall/Winter/Spring) in order to introduce new programs with a new club sign-up time posted the week prior to the club session. Clubs offered in past and on-going include:

**Arts Clubs:** Artist Elite, Crafty Kids, Extreme Colouring, Drama/Improv, Glee, Music Club, Dance, Crochet, Rainbow Loom, Dramatic Play etc.

**Athletic Clubs:** Boot Camp, Fitness Frenzy, Gym Games, Snow Club, Multi-Sports, Soccer, Basketball, Outdoor Club, Body Break, Gymnastics, Spring Athletics

**Academic Clubs:** Club Shock, Critter Club, Homework Club, Rocks & Minerals, Passport to the World, Brainteasers, Astronomy, Book Club, Time Travel

**General Interest Clubs:** Fashion Club, Lego Logic, Film Club, Illusionist, Hobby Club, Theme Park, Super Hero, Comic Club, Master Builders, Food Factory, Scavenger Hunt, Minute to Win-it, Go Girl, How Things are Made

**Trivia:** Game Show Club, Gamer's Pallooza, World Records Challenge

**Leadership Clubs:** Go Girl, Leaders in Training (L.I.T.), Yearbook

**Life Skills Clubs:** Gardening, Gardening, Sign Language, Cooking, Invention

Some of our clubs are offered more than once during the year, depending on interest during club sign-ups. Drama has the students present on stage at the end of the session. Drama allows students working together and supporting one another on stage. Costume and prop design elements are introduced. Public speaking exercises to build confidence and develop stage presence are

incorporated. Other Arts clubs include *Glee*, and *Dance*. Presentation date and time is released at club sign up time.

### **Why is it of Value?**

Firm Foundation goes beyond mere childcare and delves into fostering the child's development and interest. It's more than somewhere for the child to go, it is a place where friendships are made, interests are nurtured and the possibilities are endless. As students are exposed to a variety of learning environments they build on their strengths and improve upon their weaknesses. Children discover their talents and learn to accept one another in spite of their differences. Character building activities are embraced allowing the child to understand values such as, kindness, respect, patience and more. Additionally, well-rounded programming done in the after school program allows the child to go home and enjoy time with the family rather than having to rush out to the same extra-curricular activities in the evening.

Programming is available year-round on PA days and in the format of camps during school closures. While we encourage our students to register for our full-day camps which are offered throughout the year, particularly during the summer, it is presently not a registration requirement. In order to hold a space from one school year to the next, we simply ask that the deposit not be utilized towards the final two weeks of June care and that pre-authorized or post-dated payment for the next school year be provided before leaving us for the summer.

### **Program Plan:**

Upon arrival in the morning, children are asked to choose an activity from the central station and find a table to work with a friend or alone if preferred; Activities from the station area include creative resources, board/card games, puzzles and brain teasers, manipulative activities such as Lego, Zoobs, K'nex, Straws and Connectors. Etc. The **Super Quiet Book Area** is available for those that prefer a calm start to their day where students can select from the library cart and sit on the comfy couches. The **Homework Zone** is a place where kids can complete school work. The **Snack Station** is located in the same room for those wanting morning snack. While entry into the program in the morning hours is quite staggered it is important for the children to develop a routine that fits with their personalities so that their day gets off to the right start. We do our very best to support our students in their interests so that they are excited about coming to the CYC (Children's & Youth Centre).

Groups leave for school at staggered times. Please consult the **Bus Departure/Arrival Schedule**.  
**Appendix A**

As students arrive in the afternoon they are asked to wash their hands and go to the **Snack Station**. Students arriving earlier in the afternoon participate in center time, an extension of the morning hour program, with the addition of being given the opportunity to participate in gym time. Once the last school arrives and has had snack the structured programming begins with an afternoon welcome, where students are advised where they will be going and what activities they will be involved in for the afternoon.

**Club Days** are offered four (4) days a week where students can sign-up for a club of their choice. The requirement in signing up for Drama is to stay in the program until 4:45 PM. Clubs run for 8 to 10 weeks with the option to choose a different club when a new sign-up board is made available.

**\*\*Note:** Due to the extensive and unique nature of our program, children will not have access to outdoor play time on a consistent basis unless otherwise club permitted. Children will however have access to the gym each day.

### **Hours of Operation:**

Monday to Friday - 7AM to 9AM and 2:30PM to 6PM

PA Days - 7AM to 6PM; Summer Camps - 7:30AM to 5:30PM

### **Program Statement**

At Firm Foundation we implement an innovative care model which views the child as capable, competent and curious. We move to address the notion that children are first and for most individual. Each child possesses interests and displays talent. At Firm Foundation we recognize the idea that we not only work with children but support future: artists, authors, scientists, producers and builders. We understand it is their uniqueness and interests that when fostered will lead them to a life of fulfillment. In response, we provide child-inspired programs to cater to the interest of the child as they present themselves; through play, exploration and inquiry.

### **The Ministry**

Our curriculum is built around children's inquiries, ideas and interests. At Firm Foundation we mirror the values of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years as a professional learning resource and to support pedagogy and curriculum/program development in our program as it aligns with the Ministry of Education.

### **Our Approach**

At Firm Foundation we are dedicated not only to the health, safety, nutrition and over all well-being of children but also to their growth and development; physically, mentally and socially. Friendship, Integrity, Respect and Motivation (F.I.R.M.) are traits echoed in every aspect of our program.

### **Clubs and Curriculum**

Our clubs are the forefront of our unique program model. All clubs are designed, developed and carried out in close collaboration with the children. Through play, children are able to explore a vast variety of inquiries; learning about anything from construction to crochet. While we offer a variety of clubs, none are offered as gender specific. We embrace all lifestyles and interests of the children and encourage each one to become a master of their own special talents as well as pursue new ones. During clubs children are able to delve into whatever topic is of interest to them as they create ideas, ask questions, research and document their findings. Working as a team, children also develop a greater appreciation for their peers.

### **Environment as Third Teacher**

At Firm Foundation we strive to create experiences for the children. The environment is especially important in this matter. Creating and maintaining a warm, inviting and safe space is crucial for children to feel safe to explore and learn. Using the environment, both inside and out, helps to enhance the children's learning experience.

### **Educators and Staff**

All staff are dedicated to the well-being of our children. Caring, patient, responsive and knowledgeable, staff at Firm Foundation are not only excellent caregivers but co-learners as well. Our Early Childhood Educators are registered with the College of ECE. Other qualifications include: Ontario Teachers Certification and Child and Youth Work. All staff have completed a Criminal Reference Check, Vulnerable Sector Screen, and are required to have a valid standard first aid certification including infant and child CPR. Our staff are dedicated to professional growth and meet frequently to discuss changes to the program, children's needs and personal development.

## Parents, Families and Community Partners

Our goal is to create a firm foundation for children to stand on as they grow into adulthood. In doing so, we ensure close and open communication amongst families, friends as well as community partners to reinforce a solid and secure network of players, mutually invested in the development of the child. We work as one, along with the child as a major player, to create an atmosphere in which each child will thrive. We strongly believe that only with this foundation can children feel safe to explore, learn, experiment and grow into the outstanding role models they were born to be.

### Full Program Statement - Appendix B

#### Base Fees:

##### Full-time program

\$50 non-refundable Registration Fee

\$250 Deposit

5 days per week, before and after care **with** transportation to and from school:

Kindergarten fee - \$160/wk

Grades 1 to 6 fee - \$150/wk

PA Days and Easter Monday are built into the biweekly fees. There is also no refund or credit for full day program days which are not utilized. The PA Day/Easter Monday rate is \$55/day.

#### Base Fees:

##### Part-time program

\$50 non-refundable Registration Fee

\$180 Deposit

Part-time **before AND after school** programming (Three to Four Days): Kindergarten - \$34/day, Grades 1 to 6 - \$32/day.

Program days must be consistent and determined at the time of registration.

PA days are \$55/day and are automatically included if it falls on your scheduled program day. A minimum of three (3) days per week is required, space permitting.

Part-time **before school (5 days)** programming: Kindergarten - \$102.5/wk, Grade 1 to 6 - \$97.5/wk & Students must register for all 5 days. PA days are \$55/day.

Part-time **after school (5 days)** programming: Kindergarten - \$125/wk, Grade 1 to 6 - \$120/wk & Students must register for all 5 days. PA days are \$55/day.

#### Non-base Fees

PA Day Field Trips

Pizza Lunch Orders

NSF Fees

Late Fees

Cancelation Fees

#### Terms & Conditions

- Fees are due on a ten (10) month commitment basis via pre-authorized debit.
- Cheques are accepted for the initial registration fee, payable to **Firm Foundation**.
- Fees must be paid up-front, prior to the beginning of the program period and are due every two weeks according to the payment schedule provided during registration.

- A non-refundable \$50 registration fee per family is required. This is a one-time fee, provided you do not leave the program. Withdrawing and returning later will require another registration fee at the time of re-entry.
- A deposit of \$250/child is required for full-time students; \$180 for before school students or after school students. This deposit is allocated towards the last two weeks of programming after you have given a **one month written notice** of withdrawal and cancellation penalty is paid, if applicable.
- **NSF Fee:** A \$25.00 charge will be applied to all NSF Cheques and pre-authorized Debit transactions which decline. Two consecutive NSF charges will result in the need for an alternative fee payment plan needing to be arranged going forward or withdrawal from our program.
- **Late Fee:** A late fee will be charged for every minute your child is late being picked up. This fee is based on \$10 for the first 15 minutes and \$1 for every minute afterwards which will be paid through pre-authorized debit with regular fees.
- A surcharge will apply when a student is in the program for an unscheduled full-day of programming (i.e. snow days or PA days which were not booked two weeks in advance). The fee for full-day programming is \$55.
- **Cancellation fee:** In the event that withdrawal from the program occurs prior to the six month commitment a penalty of \$50 per eft or remaining unprocessed debit payment will apply. Cancellation fee will be taken from the deposit provided at registration or billed to the credit card on file if payment is not provided at time of notice. The cancellation fee also applies to the remainder of the school year (i.e. March to June) when any payments are being returned or authorization is cancelled.
- **Camp Cancellation Fee:** As a great deal of planning goes into our camps, cancelling last minute presents a challenge. Cancelling camp before one month prior to camp start will result in a \$25 administration fee and full refund. Cancelling up to two weeks prior will result in a 50% refund, plus a \$25 administration fee. Cancelling within 2 weeks of schedule camp start date will result in **No refund**. Switching camps is only available if space permits and is done no later than 2 weeks prior to the start of the camp you are presently registered for.
- You are responsible for paying for statutory holidays.
- There is no refund for absenteeism.
- There is no refund for programs which are cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Fee rates are subject to change. In such case, a four week notice will be given.
- **Cancellation Due to State of Emergency/Forced Shutdown or Like Circumstances:** Under circumstances in which any level of government declares a state of emergency or lock down resulting in the shut-down of the program or Firm Foundation is forced to close a full refund will be issued without penalty. If the program is not by law required to shut down, programming will continue as scheduled. In this case, the standard cancellation policy/ camp cancellation policy will take effect.

**Registration Fee:**

A \$50 non-refundable fee per family is due at time of registration.

**Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC)**

At this point in time, Firm Foundation has opted not to participate in CWELCC.

**Late Fee:** A fee of \$10 for the first 15 minutes late and \$1.00 for every minute after 6:15 PM will be charged to the parent and included in the upcoming preauthorized billing. We require you call if you are running late. If we have not heard from you by 6:15 PM we will begin calling your emergency contacts. Reoccurring lateness is unacceptable and may result in you being asked to withdraw from the program.

**Cancellation Policy:** Leaving prior to fulfilling the six-month commitment will incur a penalty of \$50 per cheque or remaining credit card transaction. The cancellation penalty must be paid in order for the deposit to be allocated to the final two weeks of programming. Cancellation also applies to those leaving prior to the end of the school year, after the six-month commitment has been fulfilled.

If cancelling within 30 days of starting, the cancellation fee will apply. If cancelling before 30 days prior to starting, the deposit will be returned in full; the registration fee is however non-refundable.

**Registration Requirements:**

In order for your child to be registered, the following information is required:

1. Registration Form
2. Medical Form
4. Family Registration Fee of \$50
5. Deposit (allocated to final two weeks of programming)
6. Fee payment; pre-authorized debit agreement from BMO with void cheque authorized for ten (10) months in accordance with the fee schedule provided by Firm Foundation.

**Arrival and Pick-Up:**

We kindly ask that your child be dropped off no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of the program. For your child's safety, we request that you come in with your child. This allows staff to then be able to identify you at pick-up. If staff is unsure as to the relationship of the adult picking up, they reserve the right to request a valid photo ID and check it against your child's registration papers. Please park in a designated parking space and come in to pick up your child at the end of the day. We kindly ask that you do not leave other children in your vehicle during pick-up. Pick-up time is no later than 6 PM. Late fees of \$10 for the first 15 minutes and \$1 for every minute after that are payable upon pick-up. You will also be asked to sign your child out confirming the time of pick-up when arriving after 6 PM. Late payment is automatically added to the next biweekly fee payment.

**Holidays:**

We will be closed on the following statutory holidays during the school year:

Labour Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day  
Boxing Day  
New Years Day  
Family Day  
Good Friday

Victoria Day

We will offer specialized camp programming through Christmas, March Break and Summer Holidays. Please ensure that you register early for these additional days as spaces will be limited.

Christmas Camp

Winter Camp

March Break

Easter Monday

Summer Camp Day camps will be offered throughout the summer months with annual closures scheduled for the third week of July and the last week of August.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Our program closes on the last week of summer break to allow our staff to adequately prepare for the upcoming semester.*

**Things Needed for Program:**

Children must come ready for school. An extra set of clothes (in a labelled Ziploc bag) may be provided and kept at our office in case of an accident. Labeled indoor shoes are required and may be kept with us also. The indoor shoes are required for the athletic component of the program; boots and sock-feet will restrict your child from participation in gym.

**Safe Arrival/Dismissal Policy:**

Firm Foundation is committed to supporting the safe arrival and dismissal of all children in our program. You are required to come in with your child when dropping them off to the program to ensure a safe arrival, as well as to communicate any important information staff may need to know about your child, (how their morning has been, changes in pick-up routine, etc.). The child may only be released at pick-up to a parent/guardian, someone on the emergency pick-up list, or an individual that has been authorized by the parent to pick-up. If the staff does not recognize or know the person picking up, the parent/guardian will be contacted for confirmation and a valid piece of I.D will need to be shown to the staff member in order for the child to be released.

**Self-Dismissal Policy:** Students of at least 10 years of age may self-dismiss once a parent has completed the Self-Dismissal Form and submitted it to staff upon arrival to the program. Form includes date and time of self-dismissal. Child will sign themselves out of the program with staff supervision. Staff will initial the time of departure and text the parent, indicated on the form, when the child is leaving the program. Parent is required to confirm the arrival of the child to their destination. If confirmation is not received, the parent will be called.

**Communicating Absenteeism:**

Parents are required to notify the centre when your child will be absent by 8AM. Please call or text (905) 699-7483. Any communicable disease your child might contract must be reported to us immediately to ensure the well-being of our other children. If your child is picked up from school due to injury/illness please notify us as soon as you are able so that our drivers can be made aware of the change to the afternoon pickup. Arriving at a school to find a child not there creates a delay and can be quite chaotic as we try to contact a parent to confirm and/or check with the school office. A text message to (905)699-7483 to quickly advise is greatly appreciated.

**For full Safe Arrival/Dismissal Policy please see Appendix C.**

### **Inclement Weather Policy:**

In the event of inclement weather please listen to the radio for the Halton District School Board advisory; if HDSB opts to close their schools, we will also be closed. If they cancel their buses, our transportation will also be cancelled. You will be responsible for transporting your child to and from school and picking up early if school closes mid-day due to poor weather conditions. On such days when schools are open but transportation is cancelled, you have the option of bringing your child to Firm Foundation for the entire day with a surcharge per day added to your biweekly billing.

### **Health:**

In order for children to participate in the program they must be healthy. The following health policies are maintained:

Parents are required to keep their children home if they display any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 38°
- Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash
- Persistent cough
- Communicable disease as listed below
- Head lice (Please contact the head lice info line (905) 825-6000 ext 5423)

Children with or suspected to have the following diseases or illnesses should remain at home away from others for the time specified unless given other instruction by a physician:

Chicken Pox - Until child is well enough to participate in all activities regardless of state of rash

Diarrhea - 48 hours from when the Diarrhea ended

Measles - At least 4 days after rash begins

Mumps - At least 9 days after swollen glands first appear

Rubella - At least 7 days after the rash first appears

Pink eye - Until antibiotic prescribed by a Physician is administered at least 24 hours

Ringworm - Until treatment has started

Scarlet Fever - Until antibiotic treatment prescribed by Physician is taken at least 24 hours

Impetigo - Until antibiotic prescribed by Physician is taken at least 24 hours

Strep Throat - Until antibiotic treatment prescribed by Physician is taken at least 24 hours

Whooping cough - Until antibiotic treatment prescribed by Physician is taken at least 5 days

Covid-19 - Follow Halton Public Health Guidelines regarding readiness to return and masking.

If you suspect your child has a communicable disease, keep your child at home and away from others. Contact your Family Doctor for a diagnosis. You must have a doctor's note readmitting your child to our licensed programs. Please call (905) 699-7483 to notify us if your child has a communicable disease so that the information can be posted, according to the licensing requirements. The name of your child will be kept confidential.

A first aid kit is kept on site and is accessible to staff. The teacher(s) and operator have had current first aid/ CPR and Anaphylaxis training.

In the event that your child becomes ill during the program, the parent(s) or emergency contact, (only if you cannot be reached) will be notified to pick-up your child. Appropriate care will be provided for your child until you arrive. If the illness or injury is serious in nature and both parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, we will call an ambulance for your child.

**Note: There is no refund for days missed due to illness.**



### **Administration of Medication:**

Administration of medication, emergency medication (i.e. Epi-pen) in response to an allergic, asthmatic or other life-threatening condition will be provided/administered in conjunction with Parent/Doctor authorization. Request the pertinent medication/medical release forms which we will keep on file along with the medication, storage details and treatment instructions.

### **Administration of creams, lotions, lip balm, sunscreen, etc.**

Children are permitted to bring items such as creams, lotions, lip balm, sunscreen etc. All items must be in its original packaging and labelled with the child's name, expiry date, special care and storage instructions as well as information on when and where to apply if it is to be used in the program. Documentation must be signed by parents acknowledging the child will bring and use these items in the program as well as information on whether Firm Foundation will be required to assist in the administration of these items where applicable.

### **Items from home:**

Toys are often very special to the child and we do not want to see them become damaged or lost. Also sharing of a very special toy is often quite difficult for younger children. For these reasons we kindly ask that toys remain at home.

As we are a Nut-Free Facility, snacks from home are not permitted in our program. A healthy nut-free snack will be provided twice daily.

Indoor shoes and a spare change of clothing may be kept at Firm or brought back and forth inside the child's backpack. Indoor shoes are extremely important to that athletic program. Children may not be permitted to participate if proper foot wear is not worn.

### **Clothing:**

Children are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing for the athletic program.

### **Nutritious Snacks:**

Nutritious, nut-free snacks are provided in the morning and after school. The morning snack is not meant to replace a morning breakfast at home, but rather to supplement it. Also to safe guard against anaphylactic reactions, snacks from home are not permitted in our program. The monthly snack menu is posted in the foyer. Birthdays are celebrated monthly with a cupcake/cookie celebration provided by Firm Foundation.

### **Bag Lunches**

During the days your child is with us all day (i.e. PA Days and Easter Monday) you will be required to send along a bag lunch with your child. Firm Foundation will provide regular snacks at the start of the day and mid-afternoon. Lunch however should consist of foods recommended by the Canadian Food Guide which are also nut/peanut free. Lunch should come packed in a thermal lunch bag, as used at school, in order to keep food items cold. A microwave is available if food needs to be heated; notify staff if this is the case. In the event that lunch is not brought from home you will be contacted to have lunch dropped-off/delivered.

**PLEASE NOTE:** During **Camps: Winter Camp, March Break Camp** and all **Summer Camps**, students **are required** to bring **Lunch and Snacks** for the entire day unless a Pizza Lunch option is offered that day.

**Sanitary Practices:** The Day Nurseries Act and the Halton Health Department require we follow and abide by appropriate sanitary practices.

**Washroom routine:** Children always wash their hands after returning from school, after using the restroom, prior to having a snack and as needed throughout the program. A liquid soap dispenser and paper towels are available for hand washing.

**Toys and Equipment:** Toys and equipment are washed and disinfected on a regular basis. We request that children refrain from bringing toys from home.

**Furnishings:** The washrooms are disinfected at the end of the day and the tables disinfected before and after snack.

**General:** Staff wash their hands upon entering the center. They also wash their hands prior to preparing and serving food.

**Transporting Children:**

We transport your child to and from school. The transportation to and from school waiver must be signed in order for us to transport. The transportation schedule is posted at the sign-in table. Please ensure your child arrives no later than 15 minutes prior to their departure time. Children arriving after our bus has left will need to be dropped to school by their parents.

Please note: Our vehicles are tested for safety regularly and we are fully licensed and insured.

**Off-Premise Excursions:**

We occasionally participate in Field Trips which require transportation. Permission to transport is automatically granted upon registering/paying online through our website.

**Parental Support:**

We welcome and encourage the involvement and support of our parents. Anyone wanting to attend a field trip is required to provide a recent CRC as well as proof of up-to-date immunizations. We also encourage our parents to participate in any of our special events.

**Specialized Services:**

We support the inclusion of special needs children in the program.

**Incident / Accident Reports:**

We are required to complete an Incident / Accident form in the event of an injury to a child while he/she is a participant of our Program. This form is shared with the Parent and must be signed and kept on file. Parents may request to have a copy of the report.

**Serious Occurrence Notification Form Posting**

The safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority. In spite of our efforts, serious occurrence (such as serious injury, fire or other disaster on site, or a complaint about service standard) can still take place. As of November 1, 2011, all child care centers are required by the Ministry of Children's and Youth Services, to post information to serious occurrences in a visible area for a period of 10 days. This posting will provide information pertaining to the incident, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. If you have any questions at any time, please speak with the Operator.

**Emergency Management:**

Staff are well trained for the event of an emergency. Policies for any emergency are reviewed annually and fire drills are conducted monthly to ensure the safety and preparedness of staff and students. In case of an emergency, parents will be notified by phone as to the event and next steps.

### **Child Protection Responsibilities:**

It is public responsibility to report a case where a child is in need of protection. Every person who believes that a child is, or may be in need of protection, must promptly call The Children's Aid Society at (905) 333-4441.

**Please note:** The Halton Children's Aid Society will be contacted if we see that younger children are left unattended in vehicles while you are the centre. Please park in the designated area and come inside to get your child. Additionally, children will not be released to anyone other than the contacts listed on their registration form without prior notification from a parent/guardian. When notice is given verbally the person picking up the child will be asked for photo identification. If notification is not provided, verbally or otherwise, the child will not be released until we have had an opportunity to speak directly with a parent.

### **Guiding Behaviour:**

We provide a warm nurturing environment where children learn to respect the needs and rights of others, interact socially with peers and behave appropriately. Children are guided through encouragement and provided with natural logical consequences to their actions. Positive reinforcement, encouragement, re-direction of inappropriate behaviour to that which is more desirable is used by our staff during conflict.

If a situation arises in which tempers flare and conflict cannot be managed through the use of positive reinforcement, the child (ren) will be asked to sit quietly for a few moments in order to calm themselves and prepare to return to the activity.

### **Prohibited Practices:**

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behavior. Practices which are prohibited in our program include; corporal punishment of the child, bodily harm, forcing students to eat/drink against their will, deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect, deprivation of the child's basic needs including food, shelter, clothing; locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining children and using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the children. Staff confirm that these practices are not allowed and do not occur at Firm Foundation.

**Volunteer & Student Policy:** Volunteers and Students who are 18 years and older are required to have produced a current criminal reference check as well as up-to-date immunization records. Volunteers/Students are not considered into staff ratio and are not permitted to work with students while unsupervised by a staff member and are trained on individual anaphylaxis plans for each student with allergies.

### **Complaints & Communication Policy:**

We take all concerns and complaints seriously; we value your opinion and strive to work closely with you and your children to create a safe and nurturing space. If you have any concerns or questions, please make it known in person with our Staff. If Staff are unable to resolve the situation, it will be brought to the attention of the Operator. Once made aware of the issue, the Operator will contact the parent within 24 hours to discuss and mediate a solution. If it is necessary, a meeting may be made between Operator, Family and Child to discuss future steps, set goals or develop solutions to the issue that are in the best interest of all involved. **For Complaints & Communication Policy See Appendix D**

### **Waitlist Policy**

In the event that our program is full at the time of enquiry into our program, a waitlist is available. There is no fee required in order to be added to our list. Determining where your child is on the waitlist is based on when children exit the program, the age of the child on the waitlist and the length of time the child is planning to stay in the program. The exceptions which could effect the order of admission include priority being given to full time students, priority to siblings of students currently registered, priority to families with two or more children and finally seating available on our vehicle for school transportation. Waitlisted student information is confidential. **For Full Waitlist Policy See Appendix E**

### **Withdrawal Policy:**

**One month written notice** is required in order to withdraw from the program and have your deposit go towards your final two weeks of programming. Withdrawing prior to the minimum 6 month commitment will incur a cancellation penalty. The same will apply to anyone withdrawing during the remainder of the school year (March to June).

We understand the parents' right to withdraw their child from the program. In the same manner, if we feel program guidelines are not respected one month notice will be given, the child will be withdrawn, the contract terminated and payment for services not yet rendered returned, if applicable.

Failure to provide Fee Payment and address NSF payments within a timely manner, may result in immediate dismissal.

APPENDIX A - TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULES



**Bus Transportation AM Schedule**

- 8:10 AM - Guardian Angels
- 8:35 AM - Irma Coulson & Tiger Jeet Singh
- 8:55 AM - Hawthorne Village PS & Bruce Trail PS



**Bus Transportation PM Schedule**

- 2:40 PM – Sainte Anne Arrives at Firm
- 2:50 PM – Our Lady of Fatima
- 3:10 PM – Guardian Angels
- 3:15 PM – OLF & GA Arrive at Firm
- 3:20 PM – Irma Coulson
- 3:30 PM – Tiger Jeet Singh
- 3:40 PM – Irma Coulson & TGS Arrive at Firm
- 3:45 PM – Hawthorne Village PS
- 3:50 – HVPS Arrives at Firm



**Van Transportation PM Schedule**

- 3:20 PM – Robert Baldwin
- 3:30 PM – Arrive at Firm
- 3:45 PM – Bruce Trail PS
- 3:55 PM – Arrive at Firm



## Program Statement

### Who Are We and What Do We Stand For?

At Firm Foundation we implement an innovative care model which views the child as capable, competent and curious. We move to address the notion that children are first and foremost individual. Each child possesses interests and displays talent. At Firm Foundation we recognize the idea that we not only work with children but support future: artists, authors, scientists, producers and builders. We understand it is their uniqueness and interests that when fostered will lead them to a life of fulfilment. In response, we provide child-inspired programs to cater to the interest of the child as they present themselves; through play, exploration and inquiry.

Our curriculum is built around children's inquiries, ideas and interests. At Firm Foundation we mirror the values of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years as a professional learning resource and to support pedagogy and curriculum/program development in our program as it aligns with the Ministry of Education.

At Firm Foundation we are dedicated not only to the health, safety, nutrition and over-all well-being of children but also to their growth and development; physically, mentally and socially. Friendship, Integrity, Respect and Motivation (F.I.R.M.) are traits echoed in every aspect of our program.

Our clubs are the forefront of our unique program model. All clubs are designed, developed and carried out in close collaboration with the children. Through play, children can explore a vast variety of inquiries; learning about anything from construction to crochet. While we offer a variety of clubs, none are offered as gender specific. We embrace all lifestyles and interests of the children and encourage each one to become a master of their own special talents as well as pursue new ones. During club programming children can delve into whatever topic is of interest to them as they create ideas, ask questions, research and document their findings. Working as a team, children also develop a greater appreciation for their peers.

At Firm Foundation we strive to create experiences for the children. The environment is especially important in this matter. Creating and maintaining a warm, inviting and safe space is crucial for children to feel safe to explore and learn. Using the environment, both inside and out, helps to enhance the children's learning experience.

### What Are Our Goals for Your Children and How Will They Be Met?

1. **Promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children.**  
The health, safety, nutrition and well-being of our children is top priority. We work to ensure children in our care are healthy and happy in all aspects of their growth and development; physically and mentally. The following are a few of the many ways we approach this goal.

In respect to nutrition, Firm Foundation provides a range of well balanced and delicious morning and afternoon snacks which have been created in respect to Canada's Food Guide and children's suggestions. Snacks are consistent as we have found children look forward to knowing what snack will be offered each day of the week but do encompass a variety of food groups and tasty options. We also incorporate one "**Movie Day**" per month where, in addition to their regular snack, children are offered a mixed variety of pretzels and chips as they watch the film. Also, we offer one "**Birthday Celebration Day**" per month to celebrate all children whose birthdays fall on or around that month. On this day, children are offered a choice of special sugar cookie or cereal treat bar.

With regards to safety, staff is aware of and constantly monitors children at play to ensure children are safe and surrounding/potential hazards are minimized. Our staff is trained, through ministry publications and monthly staff meetings to recognize and intervene in times where children may not be engaging in safe play and or in times of potential bullying.

In respect to health and well-being, staff is diligent in ensuring children are well and clean. We encourage children to wash their hands with soap and water before and after snack times as well as before and after outdoor play time or any club activity which may require children to wash their hands.

If a child sustains an injury such as a scrape, cut, bump or bruise, staff will attend to the child as required. This may include but is not limited to cleaning affected area and applying a bandage or applying ice on and off for a period of time. In terms of wound care, all staff are trained as required by the Ministry in First Aid and CPR and reviews standard first aid policies annually. No volunteer, student or staff shall be left alone with any child(ren) if they are not able to prove certification in First Aid and CPR.

## **2. Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff. Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.**

Our goal is to eradicate disrespectful as best we can. At Firm Foundation we follow a care model which places high value on **Friendship, Integrity, Respect** and **Motivation**. We remind children of our core values frequently and as necessary through group conversations as well as one-on-one discussions we make clear our core values, why we follow them and what they mean to our children and to individuals respectively.

Through not only monitoring but, providing children will the skills to cope and respond to specific interactions/situations we are able to provide a guide to mold children's everyday interactions into ones of positivity and purpose. This may include but is not limited to; providing children with sample responses to situations/comments, peer intervention strategies, self-regulation strategies, child-directed problem solving.

We regard children as powerful and remind them of their ability to control their actions and create a space around them for positivity. We encourage children to be accepting of all for their differences and strengths.

We have developed a **“Caught You Caring”** initiative in which staff and children who witness a child displaying a characteristic such as the ones listed above can write the child’s name on a “Caught You Caring” slip and enter that child’s name into a monthly ballot. Each month a few children’s names are pulled from the box and win a award as well as a small prize. Staff also comes together to choose children who have demonstrated multiple valued characteristics to recognize. We have found that this has been a fun and exciting way for the children to be reminded of our core values; friendship, integrity, respect and motivation. A staff we know it is important for all children to be recognized for their efforts and contributions and ensure by year's end that all children have been recognized for something positive they have done.

Our goal is to create a firm foundation for children to stand on as they grow into adulthood. In doing so, we ensure close and open communication amongst families, friends as well as community partners to reinforce a solid and secure network of players, mutually invested in the development of the child. We work as one, along with the child as a major player, to create an atmosphere in which each child will thrive. We strongly believe that only with this firm foundation in place will children feel safe to explore, learn, experiment and grow into the outstanding role models they were born to be. We do this by offering multiple family/friend events per year such as our **“Breakfast with Santa”**, **“Family Fun Day”** and **“Drama Presentation Day”**. All of these days are made to encourage camaraderie among and between staff, parents, families, friends and the children themselves. We strive to emulate a family. In building strong relationships with one another we share strengths, resources and knowledge, extending our support and creating the best and most positive community for our children’s growth and development.

**3. Foster children’s exploration, play and inquiry. Provide child-initiated and adult supported experiences. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which child’s learning and development will be supported.**

Firm Foundation’s most impressive feature, and one which sets us apart from other before and after school programs, is our **Clubs**. From Monday-Thursday, children can join a variety of clubs which may not only suit their interests but open their minds to new and different skills or knowledge. Clubs change with each session, of which there are three (Fall, Winter and Spring/Summer).

To ensure our clubs encourage exploration, play, inquiry, before each club session staff and children come together to discuss what club themes or ideas children would enjoy. Children’s suggestions and ideas are written down and staff will then meet to choose clubs based on popularity, children’s ages, strengths and abilities, staff qualifications, ratios, and practicality. Once clubs are chosen, children are given the opportunity to sign up for one club of their choice per day. The number of clubs offered per day is dependent on staffing, ratios and expected popularity of the clubs. We do our best to accommodate all children’s interests and first choices and are generally able to ensure every child has their first choice in clubs. Some examples of clubs we have offered in the past have been Drama, Lego Creation Club, Artist Elite, Gym Games, Multi-Sport, Petopia,



Around the World Club, Inventors Club, Illusionist Club, Comic Book Club, Homework Club. We have found over the years that this model allows children multiple opportunities to find a personal “**passion**” something that excites them and idea of what they may want to pursue in the future. With no limit to what clubs children may come to expect there is quite literally something for everyone.

Staff provide all children with the tools and environment to succeed in clubs. Leading by example, Staff will often take on the club that reflects themes they are passionate about themselves. Learning along with children, staff will research and learn about club topics to assist them in preparing for club activities and before conveying information to children. In offering activities, staff looks to the children for inspiration. Staff will ask children what they would enjoy learning about and focusing on during their club time and will cater activities to children’s responses. Activities provided are open-ended and child-initiated, accommodating for children of all ages, abilities and knowledge bases to thrive and succeed. Our goal as a staff above all is to ensure children are happy and having fun during each club session and club day. We find when happiness and fun is our priority children leave each club session knowing more than when they started and with a greater respect for the children in their club as well as the club theme itself.

### **Incorporation of indoor/outdoor/active play, rest & individual needs**

Most clubs are created with the intention of taking advantage of the great open space our childcare centre is equipped with. However, many of our clubs do allow for frequent time and trips to the outdoors. Staff spends a great deal of time getting to know children and plans clubs with respect to all children’s needs. Staff is aware some children enjoy and require much time for physical and active play possibly in group settings whereas some children require quiet, individual or/more laid-back club time. In response, when planning clubs we do our best to ensure that a **minimum** of one active club and one sedentary club option is offered each day. It is important to note that sedentary clubs will always have some element of movement in the way of activities, games, crafts etc. and all active clubs will allow for periods of rest as required by any child.

In terms of rest periods, as we are a before and after school program only, we have seen where children can display signs of fatigue. In this case, we encourage children to rest with a quiet activity or book OR to lay down in on one of the couches in our reading centre.

Firm Foundation respects differences from child to child as well as differences among individuals' day by day and hour by hour. For this reason, while we do empower children to push their own limits and try new things, staff will never force a child to participate or engage in an activity in which they do not wish to participate. We have seen many instances, for example in Drama Club, where children who may have previously been too nervous or shy to participate, come to love the club and thrive in it at their own pace. This change can be attributed to our respect for children’s individuality and allowance for children to grow and develop at their own pace. We provide the encouragement and tools for children

to thrive in all areas and allow the children to develop and grow in their own time.

#### **4. Foster the engagement and ongoing parent communication**

Ongoing communication and engagement of parents is extremely important to our staff and our children. Parents are kept up to date with goings on in many ways. Upon joining Firm Foundation parents are offered a “**Parent Handbook**” which highlights much information, for example: our policies and practices regarding children, behaviour and the overall operation of the centre; to name a few.

Another way we communicate with parents is through monthly calendars and newsletters made available at the beginning of the month to all parents as they pick up their children. Any changes, updates or special dates are made known via a letter home and/or displayed on a large white board at the entrance, next to our sign in table where a staff will be there to ensure parents are aware.

We also have a large bulletin board at the entrance of our centre which contains any information parents may need to know, examples of information included are calendar, newsletter, pickup and drop off times, clubs and daily activities, snack schedules. Parents can refer here for any information regarding the daily activities.

In terms of complaints, concerns or questions, we encourage all or any to be brought to the attention of a staff member or to the operator. Staff will, if possible, to their best to be of help and/or resolve the problem. If a staff is unable to assist the parent, they will pass along the information to the operator. Parents also have the option to contact the operator directly via drop in, phone (call or text) or email. Contact information can be found in the Parent Handbook, on our bulletin board, via business cards available at the front desk, or on-line.

We have policies in place which ensure all complaints, concerns or questions will be treated will utmost respect and fairness. We value our community, families and children’s opinions and strive to make their experiences with us the best possible. At Firm Foundation, we respect all people. All families are treated equally and with empathy.

#### **5. Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children their families and staff.**

At Firm Foundation we feel it is important to involve community partners and children’s families in the program and allow them to support and enhance our children’s experiences and their learning. Involving local partners and families demonstrates a sense of community and shows children just how many people are invested in their well-being, development and growth. Some of the local partners we have and ways we involve them in our program are as follows:

**New Life Church:** While run as a secular program we are directly affiliated with New Life Church and run our program in the NLC Childrens and Youth Centre.

As partners in the organization, NLC occasionally provides a faith-based component to our program. Prior to Covid, March Break Camps were run in partnership with Pastoral Staff joining our camp day for devotional time. Operating on the church premises our children and families are welcome to participate in any events, concerts, activities and services offered by the Church. We find those who choose to participate in these activities find it offers yet another outlet for community and friendship building.

**Little Hands Daycare:** Operating two licensed childcare centres on our property, we work closely and collaborate with Little Hands Daycare, sharing ideas and functions of day-to-day operations. We often share the same families, with us having the older siblings in our program so supporting the community together is a common goal. Both programs transport to/from schools so working together and assisting with challenges in busing has been a huge asset.

**Pizzaville & Starbucks (Kennedy Circle Locations):** These location specific companies have generously partnered with us in the past few years to cater our Camp and PA Day lunches for our students as well as our Breakfast with Santa and other family events.

**Halton Conservation Park:** During PA Days and Camps, children have loved visiting the Halton Conservation Parks in the past and look forward to visiting throughout the year.

**World Vision:** Firm Foundation is a proud sponsor of World Vision. We foster two children through World Vision, a boy and a girl. We graciously donate funds raised during our Breakfast with Santa event to support our foster children. Our children and families get to learn about our work with World Vision during our Breakfast with Santa event where we share photos, letters and drawings we have received from our foster children throughout the year. We find this provides our children with a sense of accountability to humanity and the world in which they are a part and offers them a window into the lives of children around the world. We hope this window evokes in our children a sense of gratitude and appreciation for what have and the opportunities they share here in Canada.

**Parents/Families:** In keeping with our desire to create a sense of belonging and community for our children and their families, we encourage parents and families to not only keep in constant communication with staff but offer and provide any time, skills, knowledge and resources they can. In the past, we have received generous donations in the form of raffle items and services from parents and families for our Breakfast with Santa event. The majority of proceeds of those items and services are donated directly to World Vision. In addition, we have had parents participate directly in our Clubs highlighting their skills as they relate to the Club theme. For example, we have had a parent perform an Illusionist Show as part of Illusionist Club. We have also had a parent come in and demonstrate her work as a veterinarian and answer children's questions as part of Petopia Club. We are always on the look-out for parents who would like to assist us in our Clubs and are always open to suggestions and ideas from our families.

## **6. Employ quality staff & support staff in relation to continuous professional learning.**

All of Firm's staff members are dedicated to the well-being of our children. Caring, patient, responsive and knowledgeable, staff at Firm Foundation are not only excellent caregivers but co-learners as well. Our Early Childhood Educators are registered with the College of ECE, and other qualifications include; Ontario Teachers Certification and Child and Youth Work. All staff have completed a Criminal Reference Check and Vulnerable Sector Screen and are required to have a valid standard first aid certification including infant and child CPR prior to employment. Our staff are dedicated to professional growth and meet frequently to discuss changes to the program, children's needs and personal development.

Combined our staff has accumulated over 50 years of experience with children and families. For this reason, we rely heavily on Peer Coaching and Monthly Meetings to assist us in our personal and professional development. New employees will "shadow" our staff until he/she feels comfortable running a group or club on their own. During this time any questions regarding behaviour management, transitions, problem solving/guidance techniques etc. will be answered.

Our monthly meetings serve to not only keep staff up to date with policies and procedures as well as children and families ever changing needs, but they are also a time for Staff to share any ideas, knowledge, struggles, questions, concerns and/or comments. These meetings are meant to enlighten staff as well as refresh and perpetuate their ever-growing spark for teaching. In addition, this is the time where supervising staff will offer and share any relevant, new or interesting information they have learned in the past month via webinars, seminars or readings.

Firm Foundation staff is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and The College of ECE's from which we are granted access to a plethora of resourceful documents, webinars, seminars and current information. We participate in the Halton Wide Day of Professional Learning held annually in October. The field of Education and Childcare is an every growing and changing field, our staff is conscious of this and are encouraged to visit these resource hubs often.

Firm Foundation houses an extensive number of resources from which our staff can utilize to enhance their clubs and children's experiences. These resources grow every club session.

## **7. Document and review the impact of the goals and strategies we employ**

At Firm Foundation we are invested in the quality of programming we provide. It is important to us that we are impacting and enriching the lives of the children and families we work with through our strategies to reach our goals. To ensure all our goals are being met, we frequently meet with children as a collective at the end of each club session to ask what their favourite clubs were and what parts of each club they enjoyed and why. This information is written down and reviewed to assist staff in future club planning and development. As a staff we meet as well, to discuss which clubs we enjoyed and why, our struggles and triumphs. As a team we provide praise, advice and coaching as needed. In addition, we

occasionally provide our parents with a “End of Year Survey” at the end of the year intended to be completed as a family. The survey includes aspects of the program such as clubs, snacks, staff interactions, materials offered, yearly events as well as a section for comments or suggestions for the next year. We do our best to accommodate any suggestions and take all feedback seriously as our goal is to provide the best care and experience possible for our children and families.

## **8. Uphold appropriate behavioural management techniques and avoid prohibited practices.**

At Firm Foundation we employ appropriate behavioural management techniques keeping in mind children’s age and unique needs. While we advocate fairness, staff is also aware that behaviour management is not a one-size-fits-all approach. In response, behaviour management techniques are individualized to each child. Techniques may include positive reinforcement, “**Caught You Caring**” ballots, one on one discussions, utilizing natural consequences, strategic groupings and strategic setup of classroom environment.

Staff places emphasis on creating an environment which fosters positive behaviour. We take preventative measures to avoid the need to correct children’s behaviour.

### **We do not condone any of the practices listed below:**

- Corporal punishment of the child
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a chair 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 of the childcare centre or home childcare premises 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
- 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
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

**Safe Arrival/Dismissal:**

We take care to ensure all children scheduled to attend our program are accounted for daily. If a child does not arrive to our program, as scheduled, we will connect with the parent to confirm whereabouts. Students arriving to the program are greeted and asked how their day is going, parents are asked if there are any changes to the day/pickup arrangements. At the end of the day, students are only dismissed to those authorized to pick up. When the adults picking up are new/unknown to us, we will request a photo identification.

**Self-Dismissal Forms** are available for parents of students ages 10 and older who wish to walk home from Firm. Forms must be fully completed and authorized by the parent/guardian prior to self-dismissal.

**Full Safe Arrival/Dismissal Policy Appendix C**



## Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

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To help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children enrolled at Firm Foundation and provide a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children is built into daily practices. Highlighting steps to be taken when a child does not arrive at Firm Foundation as expected and to how to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

### **Policy**

Firm Foundation will ensure that children are only released to the child's parent/guardian or to an individual that the parent/guardian has authorized release. The centre will only dismiss a child from care without supervision when the parent submits a Self-Dismissal Form allowing a child, who is at least 10 years of age, to be released from childcare without supervision. The form will include dates and times of dismissal. Where a parent/guardian completes a Self-Dismissal Form, the parent/guardian is aware that Firm Foundation is no longer responsible for that child upon their dismissal.

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

### **Procedures**

#### **Accepting a child into care**

When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff are expected to greet the parent/guardian and child and ensure they sign their child into the program on the daily attendance sheet. Staff, in interacting with the parent, will ask how the child's morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure. 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 authorized pick-up list. If the person is not listed on the authorized pick-up list, staff will make note of the individual's full name, phone number and relationship to the child in the daily written record.

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

Where a child does not arrive at the childcare centre/to the bus in the afternoon and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off, the staff must inform the supervisor. The supervisor will contact to the parent by text/phone call, inquiring to the child's whereabouts as soon as it is recognized that the child is absent. In the morning, no later than the time of the child's bus is scheduled to depart for school. In the afternoon, it is prior to the bus leaving the child's school.

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 in the daily written record.

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

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 authorized by the parent/guardian. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child; confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.

Where the individual picking up is unknown to us, ask the individual for photo identification and confirm the information matches that which has been provided by the parent/guardian.

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

Where a child has not been picked up from Firm by 6:00pm, we will begin calling the parents/guardians to advise the child is still with us and to inquire as to their arrival time. We will ensure that the child is given an activity/snack while they wait.

If we are unable to reach the parent/guardian, we will contact the emergency contacts listed for the child.

If we are unable to reach the parent/guardian or any emergency contacts listed in the child's file by 6:30PM we will contact the local Children's Aid Society at 905-333-4441 and follow their direction with respect to next steps.

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

Where a parent/guardian has completed the Self-Dismissal Form for their child to be released from care without supervision, one staff in the program must be responsible for dismissing the child from care. Prior to dismissing the child from care, the staff shall review the written instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian and release the child at the time set out in the instructions. The child shall sign themselves out of the program and staff will initial confirming the time of dismissal. Staff must communicate with parent/guardian once the child has left the facility. Parent is requested to confirm child's arrival home. If confirmation is not received, staff will call/text parent to confirm.



## Self-Dismissal Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

***This is the Parent we will text as your child is leaving the Centre. We kindly ask that you respond to our text confirming your child arrived home safely.***

Start Date of Self-Dismissal: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Dismissal: \_\_\_\_\_

End Date of Self Dismissal: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this ongoing? **YES NO**

If the Self Dismissal is not daily, please specify the day of the week your child will walk home alone. \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

***In granting self-dismissal for my child, I understand Firm Foundation will not be responsible for the safety of my child once they have signed themselves out to walk home.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





## Communication and Concerns Policy and Procedures

### **Purpose**

To provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, Firm Foundation and our Staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns and obtain a timely resolution.

### **Policy**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our program and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing. We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication about our program and students. Our staff are available to engage in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously and every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues and concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided in the same manner. A response will be provided to parents/guardians **within 24 hours**. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

### **Confidentiality**

Issues and concerns will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of those involved, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

### **Conduct**

Firm Foundation 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 or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Supervisor and/or Operator.

### **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/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

### **Escalation of Issues or Concerns:**

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to [info@FirmFoundationKids.com](mailto:info@FirmFoundationKids.com)

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers) where appropriate.

**Contacts:**

Operator, Michelle Hodder (905)699-7483 or [info@FirmFoundationKids.com](mailto:info@FirmFoundationKids.com)  
 Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)  
 Halton Health Dept (905) 825-6000

**Procedures**

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<b>Program Room-Related</b> Schedule, indoor/outdoor program activities, etc	Raise the issue or concern to staff directly <u>or</u> the supervisor or operator.	Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised <u>or</u> arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 24 hours. Document the issues/concerns in detail to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the date and time the issue/concern was received;</li> <li>• the name of the person who received the issue/concern;</li> <li>• the name of the person reporting the issue/concern;</li> <li>• the details of the issue/concern; and</li> <li>• any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.</li> </ul> Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.
<b>General, Centre or Operations Related</b> Fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to the supervisor or operator.	
<b>Staff, Supervisor, and/or Operator</b>	Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly <u>or</u> the supervisor/operator. All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	
<b>Student / Volunteer-Related</b>	Raise the issue or concern to the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <u>or</u> the supervisor and/or operator. All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	

## APPENDIX E - WAITLIST POLICY



### Waiting List Policy and Procedures

Firm Foundation recognizes that choosing the right quality child care program for your child is an important decision. We strive to accommodate all registration requests, however there may be times when space is unavailable. To address this issue Firm Foundation has created a waiting list procedure.

There is no fee required in order to place your child on a wait list. It is important for you to keep your contact information up to date with us. Children are placed numerically on a waitlist based on the date and time that you were added to the waitlist.

**Determining where your child is on the waitlist and the admission time into our program is subject to a number of considerations, including but not limited to:**

- When children currently enrolled exit the program
- The age of the child on the waitlist
- The length of time the child will require care

**Exceptions that could affect the order in which admissions are offered:**

- Children requiring full time before and after care
- Siblings of children already enrolled
- Sibling Registration (2 or more children registering at the same time)
- Space available on the Bus/Van transportation

#### Privacy and Confidentiality

Information on wait list status is made available by contacting the Program Operator by phone/email. In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals on the list, only the child's position on the list will be provided to the parent.