



### STAFF POLICY MANUAL

UPDATED 2025-06-22

These policies will be reviewed every year. All employees will be provided with a copy.

#### Our Culture

Staff Culture	Page 4
Classroom Culture	Page 5
Teacher to Child	Page 5
Between Peers	Page 6
Community Culture	Page 6

#### Our Philosophy

Size Matters	Page 7
Outdoor Learning	Page 7
Children are Capable	Page 7
Children are Collaborators	Page 7
Teachers are Co-learners	Page 7
Relationships	Page 7/8
Environment	Page 9
Daily Schedule	Page 9
Play is enough	Page 9
Diversity of Play	Page 10
Documentation	Page 10
Language	Page 10

#### Our Workplace

Staff hiring	Page 11
Emails	Page 11
Parking	Page 11
Keys	Page 11
Staff Discount	Page 11

#### Our Communication

Professional Development Days	Page 12
Staff Meetings	Page 12
Daycare Phone	Page 12

#### Our Schedule

Schedule	Page 13
Breaks	Page 13
Teachers and the Bathroom	Page 14
Sick Days	Page 14
Days off and Summer Vacation	Page 14
Snow Days	Page 15

## Ready for Work

Starting your Shift	Page 15
Leaving your Shift	Page 15
What to Wear	Page 15
Personal Belongings	Page 16
Personal Toys and Books	Page 16
Professionalism	Page 17

## Staff Health

Mental Health	Page 18
Physical Health	Page 18
Injury or Medical Event	Page 18
WorkSafe BC	Page 19
Bullying Preventions and Anti-Harassment	Page 19-22
Dispute Resolution Process	Page 22
Investigations	Page 23
Drugs and Alcohol	Page 24

## Schedule of the Day

Morning Drop Off	Page 24
Transition Indoors	Page 25
Handwashing	Page 26
Food Program	Page 26
Indoor Free-Play	Page 27
Table Tops	Page 27
Outdoor Play	Page 27
Together Time	Page 28
Birthdays	Page 28
Show and Tell	Page 28

## Risk and Safety

Excursions	Page 28
Danger in our area	Page 28
Supervision Protocols	Page 29
Needles and Safety	Page 29
Power Outage and Seasonal Risks	Page 30
Harmful Noise Level	Page 31
Pillows	Page 31
Biting	Page 31

## End of the Day

Closing Duties	Page 32
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## Other Items

Social Media	Page 32
Babysitting	Page 32

Birthday Parties	Page 32
Donations	Page 33

## OUR CULTURE

This is and will always be a work in progress. We, as life-long learners, will always grow and change. We hope that you contribute to what it means to be at Nanaimo Innovation Academy and help to create an inspirational, creative, and inclusive culture.

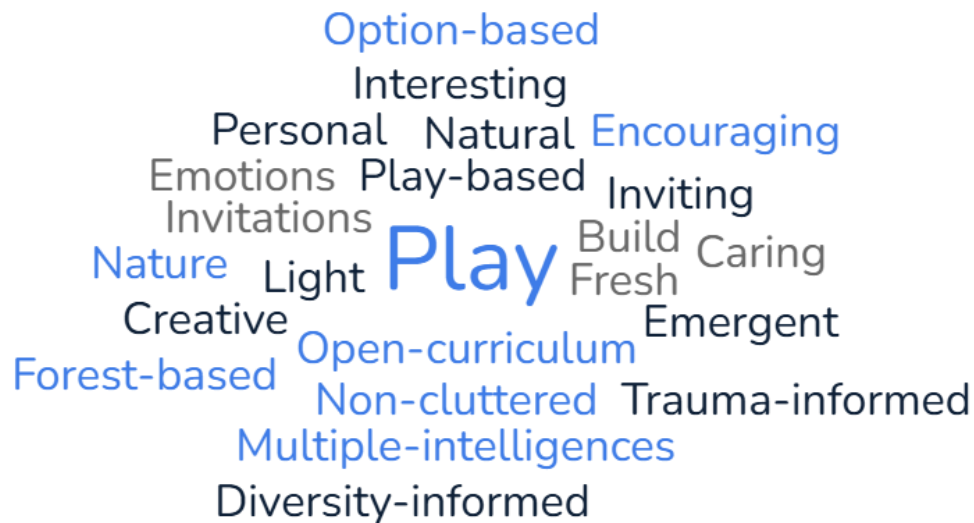
We did some brainstorming in 2019/2020 and came up with a framework. Since 2019/2020, we have collectively reflected and changed our descriptions. We have also expanded on our policies and staff training procedures. If you have any suggestion or questions, please don't hesitate to bring them forward.

### Staff Culture:



We expect staff to be professional at all times, yet be a part of a working community that has the feeling of a close-knit family. We hire staff that are passionate about their field and encourage them to build on their skills through professional development opportunities. Staff will always do their best and strive to go above the basics, being open to innovation. Staff will share best practises with their team and positively work together to grow. Staff work collaboratively and support each other in all areas. We value good communication skills and refrain from gossip. We expect staff to be inquisitive, rather than reactive, and work to understand differences, changes, or challenges. We strive for staff to feel comfortable being honest and encourage staff to be vulnerable. Staff are expected to be clear with their boundaries in a respectful and compassionate way. Staff are encouraged to make healthy choices and, if partake in addictive or unhealthy habits, will be supported by the NIA community to change their habits to more healthy choices. Staff are encouraged to be on a journey of learning, healing, and growth regarding their development and maturation. We trust everyone is doing the very best they can, based on their skills, their knowledge, and their experiences.

## Classroom Culture:



Play is at the center of everything that we do. We expect staff to value an open curriculum that follows the children's lead. Staff will set up invitations each day based on children's interests, the seasons, or cultural celebrations. The classroom itself is not cluttered, has lots of natural light, utilizes natural materials over plastics, and engages the child's curiosity and creativity. Staff are inviting and personal with the children and families. Staff work within a framework that is trauma-informed, diversity-informed, and helps to educate all on emotional intelligence. We see the image of the child as capable and value providing children options to help empower agency.

## Teacher to Child:

- What can we do to feel better/How can we help?
- Documentation – share with the children, get a better understanding of a project or inquiry, share with families.
- Teacher acknowledging, they were wrong, taking accountability
- Modelling
- Tools to build internal control
- Positive care and guidance language
- Respectful
- Time/Space/Flexibility
- Slow down...there's no rush for anyone
- Consistency
- Clear boundaries
- Expectations
- Acknowledging individual needs
- Children are people too. Children are capable.
- Appreciate child's respect
- True empathy
- Friendships/bonds
- Allowing mistakes
- Consent
- Holistic" (or "integrated")
- Modeling of self-regulation" (teachers show how they self-regulate, especially their own anxiety, or other emotions, or even their confusion at times) (children tend to "mirror" the self-regulation of their care-givers)

We're looking at:

“acknowledging individual needs” sure, but what about “**desires**” (I think we miss a lot when we focus all on needs and not equally on desires—of course, that’s a distinction of some nuance most people and care facilities don’t often gain clarity on)

### **Between Peers**

- What can I do to make them work better or feel better/ How can I help?
- Watching out for everyone – mental health, safety, and overall care.
- Open and honest
- Focus on the positive
- Problem solves effectively
- Professional boundaries
- Don’t need to be friends with everyone, but need to be kind, means including respect & consent
- Own up to shortcomings or mistakes. Learn from mistakes.
- Acknowledge everyone has strengths and areas needing improvement.
- Work together as a team
- Pitch in to help out in every area.

### **Community culture**

- Documentation to share with the community
- Communicating what doing at school & encourage to do at home
- Family events
- Yoga at the daycare
- A.S.L classes and other baby groups—Mother Goose, Sensory etc
- Teacher Tom and other guest speakers
- Out in the community. Participate in events
- Professional resources, CDC, Pacific Care
- Truly caring about families/want to help them
- V.I.U and fostering other collaborations and partnerships
- Pursuit of quality (and how do we learn what quality is in qualitative ways?). Be leaders in the field.
- Healthy, sane and sustainable (this seems imperative in that we are part of a world going into major scale global crises, like global warming)

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Nanaimo Innovation Academy, we utilize the best practices from various educational pedagogies-- Waldorf, Montessori, Reggio, Whole Child Education, Play-based Learning, Forest School Theory-- without being limited by the rigidity of ascribing to just one philosophy. By being flexible and in constant evaluation of what is best for child development and learning, we can innovate and create a program designed for our student's current needs, interests, and growth.

### **Some key aspects of our program:**

1) Size matters—we prefer small group environments

A small group environment allows for more personalized attention and strong relationships to grow. Our small class sizes mean that teachers are in constant communication with one another throughout the day, so that students are served with seamlessly integrated care and support. We can also spend time observing the children's intellectual, social, and emotional progress in a meaningful way, rather than just managing behaviours and activities.

2) Outdoor learning is crucial to development.

Over the years, there have been many research studies into outdoor education and child development. These studies have concluded that with increased exposure to nature and the outdoors, the learning process is boosted meaning increased creative thinking, motivation, and wellbeing. Children at Nanaimo Innovation Academy will be outside for a large portion of the day, rain or shine. By age 3, children at Nanaimo Innovation Academy will typically be outside for 50% or more of their day.

3) Children are capable and are naturally curious.

Children are the main initiators of the learning process. All educational and artistic endeavours are about the process, not the product. Children are inspired by their own interest to know and learn, and as such they are endowed with a uniquely individualistic understanding of how to construct learning on their own.

4) Children are collaborators.

Children are treated as active collaborators in their education, as opposed to passive observers or vessels to be filled with knowledge.

5) Teachers are co-learners.

Teachers are partners, nurturers, and guides who help facilitate the exploration of children's interests as they work on short and long-term projects. They guide experiences, open-ended discovery, and problem solving. The main goal for the teacher is to listen and observe the children, as well as question and listen for opportunities to encourage further exploration of a child's interests. There is a reciprocal respect that strengthens and grows between children and teachers, thus the need for using honourifics are not needed (all teachers at Nanaimo Innovation Academy are called by their first name). Children and teachers are expected to collaborate, but it's the responsibility of the teacher to identify when a concept can be used to further discovery and learning. Our teachers are skilled, open-minded, value differences, and respect all individuals.

6) Relationships are a key aspect of learning.

Learning is based on interrelationships—close interaction between teachers, parents, and children. Nanaimo Innovation Academy children, parents, and staff appreciate the warm, supportive family atmosphere here. Typically, new children and families quickly become part of our school community with ease. At various times throughout the year, there will be communal potlucks, guest speakers for the whole family, and outdoor excursions.

The main relationships we intently foster are between:

- **Child and teacher**

We hire trained caregivers who are passionate about education and love working with children. Providers have their Early Childhood Educator (ECE) credentials so they know the kinds of interactions children need and child-development stages. Staff understand the importance of protecting the dignity of the child, maintaining clear boundaries, providing a space or strategies to help give the child the support they need, while making the child feel heard, understood, and genuinely cared for.

It takes time for a teacher and child to develop a connection to the point at which the teacher can truly understand the child, their interests, and their needs. The children must trust their teacher. Children build trust by being in a steady, caring, and safe environment over time. At Nanaimo Innovation Academy, we strive to provide an ideal work environment resulting in minimal staff turnover so that these strong relationships are maintained over time.

- **Teacher and parent**

Parents are a child's primary and most influential teacher. Parental involvement is critical to the creation of a learning community for children. Our teachers learn from parents about their child in order to best support them. Open and regular communication between teachers and parents is a critical component of our philosophy. It may take form in many ways, but parents are welcome to join us and play an active role in their child's learning experiences. Parents, both in their skills and ideas, are very valuable to our community.

- **Child and their peers**

Children are collaborators and work best when included in a community of learners as opposed to working independently. Therefore, we place an emphasis on working in small groups, which is based on the idea that we form ourselves through interaction with peers, adults, and the world around us.

- **Child and themselves**

We teach kids to learn about what they're feeling and why. It is important to help them to start listening to their body and trusting their feelings. We also teach them the tools and language to express their feelings and needs. This starts by being aware of their senses. Each sense sends information to the brain to help us understand and perceive the world around us. The first 5 are important and are relatively easy to comprehend— Sight, Smell, Sound, Taste, Touch. The additional three are a little bit tricky but equally as important for understanding the world and how they are feeling.

- Vestibular: Your movement sense or the feeling of needing to move. A teacher may ask "You're having a hard time sitting still? Maybe you need a movement break?"
- Proprioception: Your body awareness sense or sense of space. A teacher may say "You're running your hand on the wall in the hallway? Let me stand next to you so you know where you are in space."
- Interoception: Your sense of what's happening on the inside of your body (feeling hungry, having a headache, needing to go to the bathroom). A teacher may ask "Are you hungry? It can be really hard to focus when you feel that way!"

- **Child and nature**

We value the natural environment and encourage sensitivity, respect, and understanding for all forms of life. Reducing, reusing, and recycling is also very

important to us. Children will learn about environmental sustainability and will be encouraged to make environmentally conscious choices.

- **Child and food**

It is crucial that your child have a healthy relationship with food. The foods and liquids we consume provide our bodies with essential vitamins, nutrients, and minerals that keep us thriving and active. Our fuel for the day contributes greatly to our daily emotional, physical and cognitive function and successful development. It is important we take into consideration nutrition as part of your child's environment. Often, we've observed the results of unfulfilled nutritional needs and the connection to a child's ability to use and manage their self-control skills, concentrate effectively, and problem solve. If a child's daily nutritional needs are not being met, it may have an affect on their success throughout the day and ultimately their learning. Please see more about our [Kid's Healthy Eating Project](#).

- **Child and the local community**

We teach the value of community and explore our local community by holding field trips, hosting guest speakers, and forming partnerships with other local organizations.

- **Teacher and Teacher**

The teacher relationships with each other are extremely important, as they set the tone for the classroom. Teachers must be open, collaborative, curious, kind and work harmoniously with each other. They role model positive relationships and cooperation to the children.

#### 7) All environments act as the third teacher

Our classroom environment, outdoor play space and the forest we visit are designed and/or selected to enhance and encourage learning. Classrooms and common spaces are carefully integrated with one another, as well as with the outside community. We value an environment that builds and promotes creativity. We have a zero-screen time policy for the younger years (ages 0-4). As children age, we mindfully introduce elements of technology that provides further exploration and allow children to use these tools creatively. We discourage the use of overly-commercialized products that promote violence, gender bias, and apathy. Classrooms use natural furnishing to encourage real-life interactions. Nanaimo Innovation Academy does its best to source and use naturally made products and products from our natural surroundings and created by local providers.

Some key features of our classrooms:

- Nature products – typically made of wood or things found in nature, such as plants, driftwood, leaves, and flowers.
- The space is calming and not cluttered.
- We do not put out a lot of toys. Instead, we have toy rotation that is evolving and changing depending on interest and exploration.
- We use as much natural light as possible.
- Children's art is displayed. Things are displayed with intention.
- The classroom is designed to allow children to practise their self-help skills.

#### 8) Daily schedule with room for flexibility

At Nanaimo Innovation Academy, we recognize one size does not necessarily fit all. We have a general schedule for how the day should go, but value a lot of flexibility to follow natural curiosity and progression of exploration, as directed by the children. The children need a relaxed pace with ample time to explore. We aim to help children make connections between various topics and activities that they are interested in, without having a pre-programmed curriculum or prescribed schedule to follow. This also means that teachers are not planning elaborate projects or learning points in advance – they're

allowing projects to emerge based on the interests of the children. Teachers will introduce new topics or ideas to a group, typically based on natural seasonal activities and changes. These new ideas will be explored further if the children show an interest.

#### 9) Play is enough.

We focus on the best possible ways to support you and your child, by finding new and innovative ways to engage and promote your child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Unstructured play is one of the best ways that children learn. We feel children need to be offered the opportunity for creative activities, such as using blocks and dress-up clothes. We want children to experience, rather than being a passive recipient—squishing mud through their fingers, building sand castles, jumping into a pile of leaves. We do not do repetitive or excessive worksheets. We aim to help your child grow into an independent and confident student ready to embrace the challenges of increasing academic rigor.

#### 10) Diversity of play.

Children are natural communicators and should be encouraged to express themselves however they feel they can and through whatever means they can. This may include words, movement, drawings, paintings, buildings, sculptures, and more. Because of the many ways that children express, discover, and learn, children should be encouraged to use many materials for discovery, communication, and even demonstration of what they understand, wonder, question, feel, or imagine. It is then, conversely, the teacher's responsibility to facilitate the exploration of a child's surroundings.

#### 11) Documentation.

Teachers, in addition to playing the role of a guide, are also responsible for documenting the learning process within the classroom and transcribing the verbal language used by children. Teachers may take photos and even videos to better understand the children and assist parents in becoming more aware of what their child is doing. Twice a year, we also provide Developmental Narratives to parents that provides information about our observations on their child's development. Documentation also provides teachers an opportunity to evaluate their own work and exchange ideas with others. Moreover, documentation demonstrates to children that their work is of value.

#### 12) Language

Teachers use inclusive language, speaking clearly and help the children learn to take ownership of their needs and feelings. By acknowledge children's feelings when they are having emotional times and helping them to name their feeling, we aim to support their social and emotional development. We model using "I" language regarding feelings and needs. (i.e. "I feel angry when..." instead of "You made me angry when..."). We are mindful of using inclusive language instead of binary definitions of gender—by saying children, people, or everyone instead of boy and girls. We allow space for children to self-identify how they would like to be addressed.

We put value on learning other languages to help us expand our knowledge of the world and the ways people communicate. Currently, we teach sign language, French, and Spanish. We also learn a variety of words from our staff that speak languages other than English.

## **OUR WORKPLACE**

### **Staff Hiring**

We hire committed, passionate, and professional employees to help run the daycare. As staffing needs emerge, we put out job postings on our Facebook page and Indeed.com. We encourage anyone, internal or external, to apply for any new job postings. Interviews are conducted by as many of the management team as possible. We value having multiple perspectives on hiring a candidate.

### **Emails**

Currently we have the following email addresses:

- Executive Director - [admin@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:admin@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- Bookkeeping – [office@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:office@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- Office Manager – [info@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:info@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- Community Health Manager: [nutrition@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:nutrition@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- IT Program Manager- [it@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:it@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- Pre-K Program Manager- [prek@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:prek@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- Forest Program Manager- [forest@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:forest@nanaimoinnovation.org)
- NIA Board of Directors – [nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com](mailto:nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com)

Our Office Manager is our WorkSafe Representative.

We have an HR Support person that is a resource for staff to utilize for problem solving, growth, and support.

### **Parking**

Staff will be given a staff parking pass, so that we identify staff cars in our parking lot. Staff must return the parking pass within 48 hours upon leaving their position, otherwise a \$10 fee will be taken off their last pay.

Staff are expected to park efficiently and pull in completely to the spot (marked by the parking stoppers).

### **Keys**

All staff will be given the keys to their particular areas of the buildings. Staff will sign a key agreement (which pertains more details). Staff are not to enter the premise outside of their scheduled hours without prior approval from the ED. Staff must return the keys within 48 hours upon leaving their position, otherwise a re-keying fee will be taken off their last pay and legal action may be taken.

### **Staff Discount**

Staff with child care needs will receive a discount of \$200/month, after the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) reduction. Staff must apply for ACCB and qualify to get the discount. The discount does not pertain to any food or any other fees. No overage will be paid out.

\* Staff that were hired prior to August 21, 2024, will have the option to take the previous staff discount policy of 50% after ACCB has been applied (not pertaining to any food or any other fees).

When an employee leaves their position, the daycare may or may not decide to cancel care for the employee's child. If the child remains in care, regular rates will apply.

The daycare will do its best to provide a daycare space to staff. If none are available, the staff member will be first on the waiting list for the next spot. The daycare will not remove a current family to provide a space to an employee.

## OUR COMMUNICATION

### Professional Development Days (Pro-D)

Pro-D Days gives us a wonderful chance to discuss and explore various topics together, without the demands of being on the floor.

All Pro-D days are pre-scheduled on the annual calendar for the year and are from 1:00-3:30. All Pro-D Days are paid. It is important that everyone attends our Pro-D Days, as there is a number of important information communicated at these meetings.

No vacation will be approved on Pro-D days. If staff do not attend a meeting, and do not give notice of their absence, this will count as 'missing a shift'. If you need help figuring out child care, please notify the ED not less than 2 weeks in advance, so a plan can be made.

Staff are encouraged to provide suggestions for Pro-D. We bring in guest speakers and provide in-house training at no cost to staff. Certificates are provided for Pro-D training after the last Pro-D session of the year.

### Staff Meetings

Staff Meetings are program-specific and are called as needed by the Program Manager. Typically, they call one every other month. These may be in-person or on Zoom. Staff must submit their hours for staff meetings during the regular pay period. It is important for each program to have time to discuss things off the floor.

### Daycare Phones

We have two phone numbers at the daycare:

1. 905 Hecate (Oak) – 250-591-7700
2. 929 Hecate (Cedar) –250-591-0501

It is always important to have a cordless daycare phone for the program when you are inside or with the group outside. This is a way that we can easily communicate between programs and ensure our safety.

IMPORTANT: One ring is an external phone call and two rings in an internal call.

We always answer “Nanaimo Innovation Academy, (insert name) speaking” to external calls.

Typically, if the Oak building phone rings the Office Manager or Program Manager (on their office day) will answer the phone. If neither of them is at the daycare, it will be communicated to the appropriate area to answer the phones (typically 3-5 program).

The kitchen is responsible for answering the Cedar building phone.

It is important for all staff in the kitchen to know how to answer internal and external calls and how to transfer calls.

#### INTERNAL CALLS

Each area/program is assigned a phone for internal intercom calls. They are:

For 905 Hecate (Oak) – 250-591-7700

1. Office and Admin
2. IT
3. Pre-K Program
4. Forest

5. Kitchen (also used for 3-5 during nap)

929 Hecate (Cedar) –250-591-0501

1. Executive Director
2. IT
3. Pre-K Program
4. Office and Admin
5. Kitchen

To use the intercom between programs, press the 'Menu' button and then select 'Intercom' Once in the 'Intercom' selection, press the number of the phone you wish to call.

#### EXTERNAL CALLS

If an external call needs to be transferred to another phone:

- Let the person know that you are going to transfer the call and to call back if the transfer doesn't work.
- While the person is waiting on the phone press the dash button in the top right-hand corner (Menu).
- Scroll through the Menu until you get to Intercom page
- Select the Intercom page and then press the number of the phone you want to transfer to and the phone will be called
- When the staff member answers the phone, you can let them know who is on the line or any other message. Then hang up.
- The staff member then stays on the phone and the transferred call come on.

Please ensure that the phone is on the charger at the end of the day.

## **OUR SCHEDULE**

### **Schedule**

Our schedule is made monthly by the ED and distributed through e-mail. The schedule is set by the middle of the prior month. Printed copies are available on the program clipboard and in the front office. Staff are responsible for knowing their shift schedule and any changes that they make to their schedule with their colleagues. Staff must get approval from their Program Manager before working additional hours

All staff must get approval from the ED before working over 40 hours per week or before entering the daycare outside of operational hours. Typically, we do not approve hours over 40 per week. When taking on extra shifts, staff are responsible for tracking their hours and must let their Program Manager know when they may go over 40 hours (before it happens).

To help the daycare operations run smoothly in times of staff shortage, staff need to be open to working in any program to make the ratio and to keep the children well supervised. Please be open to the last-minute changes in shifts and programs. We try our best to have the consistency, however we must ensure all the children can attend in case of staff illness and emergencies. We may also contact staff on their days off to see if they are able to help cover staff absences.

### **BREAKS**

Nanaimo Innovation Academy provides paid breaks to staff. Typically, we have someone scheduled to do breaks in each program. If there is no one scheduled, or someone is sick, a manager may cover breaks. Staff may leave the daycare during their break or rest in one of the designated break areas:

- staff room by Oak IT with a microwave and fridge provided
- the deck of Cedar kitchen (please do not disrupt the kitchen team)

- the lobby area of Cedar (just outside Keely’s office)
- the picnic table in front of the Cedar building
- Cedar library area (NO EATING IN THIS SPACE – and only if it is not being used by a program).
- Inside the Oak Pre-K classroom (only if it is not being used by the program).
- Please do not take your break in either the Oak or Cedar kitchen space.

On rare occasions, staff may be required to break onsite and count in ratio.

It is expected that staff return promptly from their break/be on time, so not to delay the breaks for others. Here are the break times, based on your scheduled hours:

4 hours or less	No break
Over 4 hours- up to 5 hours	15 min paid break
Over 5 hours- up to 9 hours	30 min paid break
If working over 9 hours	30 min paid break and find time to take another 10-15 min break at some point in the day.

### Teacher Bathroom Policy

Teachers should be prepared and aware of what times of the day they will be left alone. If you know that your fellow teacher is off at certain times, please be pre-emptive and go to the bathroom shortly before they leave. If a teacher is alone and needs to use the bathroom the following should be done:

- 1) Call for an extra teacher/office worker to step into the program while you go to the bathroom (all staff have their criminal record check, and all office staff have their responsible adult)
- 2) If no one is available to cover for you, lock all classroom doors and have the children engage in a calm and quiet activity.

**\*PLEASE NOTE\*** option 2 should be used after all other resources have been exhausted.

We understand that bathroom urges happen, and we don’t want anyone to damage their bodies. We want to keep the children safe and ensure all staff are looking after themselves.

### Sick Days

If you cannot come into work for your scheduled shift due to illness or otherwise, you are required to let the Program Manager **and** your team members know as soon as possible. If you are the opening shift, please inform the manager and your team the night before. If you are any other shift, please ensure you have informed everyone of your absence by 6:30am.

Sick day details:

- Sick days will start accumulating after the 3-month probationary period.
- Staff will accumulate 6 sick days a year
- Sick days reset every January each year
- It is up to staff if they want to use their accumulated sick day or take an unpaid day (to keep their sick days for another time). If you would like to use a sick day, this must be communicated on our time sheet before the bookkeeper has collected them for the pay period.
- If you are sick for one or two days consecutively, a doctor’s note will not be required. After two days off being sick, a doctor’s note will be required. If a doctor’s note is not provided, staff will only be approved for two sick days.
- Staff will not be paid out for sick days
- Staff are not able to use sick days for non-illness related requests.

## **Days Off and Summer Vacation**

We have three closure periods in Dec (5 days), March (5 days) and Aug (5 days). We encourage staff to take holidays during those closures. If holidays are requested outside of those times, we may or may not be able to approve them, depending on staff availability.

In the summer months, we typically hire another staff member to cover additional summer vacations. Summer vacation requests for the month of May, June, July, and August must be submitted by filling out the vacation request link before April 1 each year. Once the summer schedule has been made, any vacation or time off requests must be arranged by you and your co-workers. Staff must be ready to work in full capacity by September 1 each year.

Each year, we open a new vacation request link on December 1.

Here are some things that will be considered:

- The date the vacation request was submitted.
- The length of time being requested. For example, those needing length of time off for a holiday
- If we can coordinate appropriate coverage

Please note that only one staff member per program may be off at a time (depending on staff availability). Having multiple people off in a program at the same time becomes too difficult for the staff and the children. This also ensures that we don't run short on staff during these months.

Although we do our best to accommodate your requests, it is not guaranteed until you get the confirmation from the ED. Please do not schedule travel arrangements or plans until your vacation request has been approved. Summer requests will be approved or denied by April 30.

Throughout the rest of the year, if you would like to take extra days off, please let the Program Manager and ED know at least one month in advance. If less than one month, please work with your team to figure out coverage.

## **Snow Day Closures**

Staff are expected to work from home during a snow day closure---program planning, documentation, filling out reports, creating a daycare friendly dance party playlist on Spotify, organizing photos, creating a post for the parent FB group from this week and so on.

An employee scheduled for an 8+ hours shift will be expected to work for 4 hours from home. For staff working less than 8 hours, they are expected to work 2 hours from home. Staff must be able to show their work. If employees don't have any at-home work or are not sure what they can do, they should contact the ED.

If a staff does not want to work from home, they can decide not to do any work. They would not put down any hours on the time sheet.

Any staff that want to work the additional hours, up to the hours of their full shift must contact the ED to arrange something for a later date.

## **READY FOR WORK**

### **Starting your Shift**

Plan to arrive a few minutes before your shift so that you can sign in at the office and be on the floor and start at your scheduled time. If you need time to make coffee or get settled in other ways to before starting your shift, please allow yourself time before your shift starts. If you are scheduled for 9am, you must be on the floor ready to work at 9am.

If you sign in at your scheduled time, you will be considered late. Plan to arrive a couple of minutes before your shift. A pattern of lateness may cause for a discussion and a plan moving forward. It is important that you are on the floors ready at the start of your shift.

### **Leaving your Shift**

Please plan to work your whole shift. There may be times where the numbers are low and you can leave early. In those instances, you must check with your colleagues to make sure that any duties needing to be completed are done before you leave.

All staff must sign in and out of their shift every day.

If you are scheduled until 5:00pm and you clock out at 4:55pm, it will be assumed that you did not complete your full shift. There is always something that can be done to help your colleagues or prepare for the next day.

### **What To Wear**

At Nanaimo Innovation Academy, all staff members are expected to dress in a way that reflects the professionalism that we uphold in our respective fields of work and within the overall organization. This reflection extends beyond the confines of the daycare, influencing how future families, community partners, and the general public perceive us.

All staff should wear items that follow all of the 3 C's (Comfortable, Clean and Courteous).

**Comfortable:** Clothing should not restrict movement, as all staff are expected to be able to interact and participate in all areas of programming. Clothes should be worn that are ok to get stained or dirty, during the course of the day.

**Clean:** Clothing and footwear should be clean with no rips, tears, stains, missing buttons or strong odors. We expect staff to have good personal hygiene. We are a fragrance-free center so no strong deodorants, detergents, perfumes, colognes or body sprays are allowed.

**Courteous:** Staff interact with children, families and other members of the public on a daily basis, and should dress professionally. This includes following NIA's Dress Policy regarding commercialized attire (if the children have to follow it, it's only respectful that staff do the same). If you are unsure if an item of clothing is professional enough or not, please consult with your manager.

#### **On-Site Teachers and Office:**

- All teachers should ensure that their clothes allow movement (bending, sitting, crouching, etc) without restriction.
- Clothes should not be overly baggy/ long so they do not become a tripping hazard or soak up rain.
- In the winter, teachers should model wearing the right attire for the children, such as wearing a toque/ hoodie, jacket, rain pants, gloves and boots.
- In the summer, shorts or dresses/ skirts should reach at least the length of the fingertips (when the arms are placed by the legs) and hats should be worn when outside in the sun. When wearing skirts/ dresses, shorts should be worn underneath to prevent any accidental exposure.
- No bra or undergarments should be visible.
- No cleavage or mid-drift should show when wearing a shirt.
- During the summer/ hot weather shoes can be worn that are open toed, so long as they allow teachers to walk and run comfortably without risk of the shoe falling off.
- All staff should have indoor shoes that can be left at the daycare.
- Please bring a water bottle each day.

### **Forest Programs/ Field Trip Classes:**

- Each day, the Forest teachers must model to the children wearing the correct gear including- boots, rain pants, rain jacket, toque/hat, and gloves.
- Teachers should ensure that they have all the necessary layers/ equipment to be out in the forest comfortably regardless of weather.
- Forest Teachers should have spare clothes to change into if they get too wet and/or muddy.
- Please bring a water bottle each day.

### **Kitchen:**

- Staff should ensure that their clothes allow movement (bending, sitting, crouching, etc) without restriction and that no sleeves are at risk of catching on items.
- Hair should be tied back or a hairnet worn.
- Shoes should be comfortable, closed toe and non-slip.
- In the summer, shorts or dresses/ skirts should reach at least the length of the fingertips (when the arms are placed by the legs).
- Aprons must be worn to protect clothing and maintain a clean presentation.

### **Maintenance**

- Clothing should be protective and comfortable.
- Goggles must be worn when weed-whacking.
- Ear plugs or ear muffs must be worn when operating loud tools or machinery.
- Closed-toe shoes must be worn.

### **Interviews/ Conferences/ Professional Development Workshops/ Community Functions**

- All staff should dress up/ dress professionally when attending interviews, training, professional development opportunities or other professional community events and functions, as they are representing NIA.

### **Practicum Students/ Visitors**

- Any practicum students or visitors should also follow the above guidelines for the areas that they are working in.

### **Personal Belongings**

Your belongings should be kept in a secure place, as designated in your classroom or work area. All cell phones must be kept silent without vibrate activated and in a secure location in the staff storage area. Exceptions are made for managers that are scheduled on office days.

Staff may only use cell phones on their break or bring them with them if taking the kids for an excursion. Cell phones are not to be used in front of the children or for personal use other than during breaks.

### **Personal Toys and Books**

Your belongings should be kept separate from the daycare toys and books. Item may not stay at the daycare for more than a week, unless given special permission by the ED.

The daycare is not responsible for any loss, damage or destruction of a staff's personal belongings.

If you leave employment, you have 1 week to pick up your toys and books, otherwise they will be considered donations to the daycare.

## **Professionalism Amongst Colleagues**

Be positive and friendly to all staff, parents, and children. Your mood impacts the environment...and the kids feel it. Be sure to smile and be welcoming. Model kindness. Everyone has bad days...if you're having one, let your team know and let them know how you can best be supported. On the same note it is important to be able to be in the moment and present, the children should not be affected by our 'bad days' or our personal challenges. If you are having personal struggles that are going to impact your ability to work with the children, you should consider taking the day off.

Please do not talk about inappropriate topics or have adult conversations while at the daycare. Little ears hear everything....and really, you're here for the kids. Save these conversations for later. Share stories of your life and connect with the teachers in a meaningful way, only when it is appropriate.

Do your best not to be negative or let negative thoughts collect. It's always best to talk out your problems with your co-workers at an appropriate time. If there is a problem that needs support, please talk with your Program Manager, the HR Support person or ED.

## **STAFF HEALTH**

### **Mental Health**

We all need to take care of our mental health because it's an important part of our overall health. Feeling anxious or stressed can be a normal part of life. Having these feelings doesn't necessarily mean there's anything wrong. However, when feelings like stress, anxiety or sadness increase to the point where they are impacting daily life, they can become a mental health concern to be taken seriously, and support should be sought when needed.

Teachers have a responsibility to be able to support all aspects of development of the children in our care. If it is identified that someone is unable to attend to this responsibility, due to mental health concerns, a meeting will be set up to discuss a support plan.

A support plan may include:

- Time off for a temporary time
- Reduced hours
- Reduced responsibility
- Resources and information that provide ways to gain support

### **Physical Health**

Our physical health is equally as important as our mental health.

We encourage staff to get outside and take a walk on their breaks, have walking meetings, and not sit too long in one spot (as this is the worst thing ever for your body).

Please do not come to work unless you feel physically healthy to do so. If you need to take a sick day, please see the Sick Day Policy.

If you are injured but would still like to work, please discuss with the Office Manager and/or ED a way to have modified duties or shorter shifts until your injury has healed. In these cases, a doctor's note will be required that specifies the activities you are able to engage in and the duration of time needed for modified duties.

### **Injury or Medical Event**

- 1) All incidents, no matter how small, are reportable. If a minor incident occurs, it is to be reported to a manager and a minor/staff incident form must be filled and filed in the program's Communication Binder.
- 2) If an incident occurs that requires medical attention, while at work, first aid should be provided by a person with a valid First Aid or if more serious, a medical professional. Any incidents/ injuries must be reported to a manager and/or Work Safe representative as soon as possible. If medical attention is required after work hours due to a workplace injury, you must notify your manager/ Work Safe representative as soon as possible.
- 3) If an incident occurs during work hours that requires medical attention and are unable to do the reporting yourself, seek medical help and another staff will start the forms regarding the incident and you must complete any missing details as soon as you are able to.
- 4) If for any reason you are not able to perform your duties and return to work as normal, after a workplace incident, we require a Back to work plan/Modified duties plan from a doctor. We will work to accommodate based on the modified plan/ information provided from the doctor. If a plan is not provided or the plan is not feasible for NIA to accommodate, you will be required to be away from work until such a time as a doctor deems you are fit to return to work and is able to provide a letter stating so.
- 5) If modified duties are required, due to an injury/ treatment that occurred outside the workplace, we require a note from a doctor stating so. If a letter of modified duties is not supplied, you will be required to be away from work until a fit for work letter is submitted to us from a doctor.
- 6) When booking personal medical appointments/ treatments that will require time off, we ask that as much notice as possible be given. If you suspect that you might require a long recovery or a medical leave/ medical EI, please inform us as soon as you are able so that we may plan coverage and how to best support you.

The [Workers Compensation Act](#) regulates that WorkSafeBC must be notified in the case of a worker's death or a serious injury. Report the following within 72 hours if:

- A first aid attendant recommends an employee seek medical treatment
- The injury requires medical treatment
- The worker receives medical treatment for the injury
- The worker is unable to return to work beyond the day of the injury
- The injury or accident results, or is claimed to result, in the breakage of an artificial member, eyeglasses, dentures or a hearing aid
- The employee or WorkSafeBC has requested that an employer's report be sent

### **WorkSafe BC**

At the daycare, everyone has varying levels of responsibility for workplace health and safety. As an employee, you also have three key rights.

Your rights

- The right to know about hazards in the workplace.
- The right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace.
- The right to refuse unsafe work.

Your responsibilities

As an employee, you play an important role in making sure you — and your fellow workers — stay healthy and safe on the job. As a worker, you must:

- Be alert to hazards. Report them immediately to your supervisor or employer.

- Follow safe work procedures and act safely in the workplace at all times.
- Use the protective clothing, devices, and equipment provided. Be sure to wear them properly.
- Co-operate with joint health and safety committees, worker health and safety representatives, WorkSafeBC prevention officers, and anybody with health and safety duties.
- Get treatment quickly should an injury happen on the job and tell the health care provider that the injury is work-related.
- Follow the treatment advice of health care providers.
- Return to work safely after an injury by modifying your duties and not immediately starting with your full, regular responsibilities.
- Never work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance, or if you're overly tired.

## **Bullying Prevention and Anti-Harassment Policy**

### **Application**

This policy statement applies to all workers, including permanent, temporary, casual, contract, and student workers. It applies to interpersonal and electronic communications, such as email.

### **Workplace conduct**

Bullying and harassment of any description will not be tolerated at Nanaimo Innovation Academy. All workers will be treated in a fair and respectful manner. This is highlighted in each staff member's job description and is contained in the code of conduct. We also require a commitment to implementing and upholding our *Diversity and Inclusion Policy* from all staff.

Nanaimo Innovation is committed to:

1. Fostering a safe, caring, and orderly school, daycare, and workplace environment
2. Promoting staff's physical safety, social connectedness, and inclusiveness
3. Clearly describing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
4. Ensuring staff know what harassment is, preventing it from happening, and providing parents, students and faculty with a mechanism to deal with harassment if it occurs
5. Protecting staff from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity
6. Providing fair and confidential treatment, mutual respect, and cooperation to students, parents and faculty

### **Workers must:**

- not engage in the bullying and harassment of other workers
- report if bullying and harassment is observed or experienced
- apply and comply with the employer's policies and procedures on bullying and harassment

Staff who knowingly commit acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying or violent behaviours will be subject to disciplinary action. All members of the Nanaimo Innovation Academy community have the responsibility of monitoring, reporting, and addressing harassment, intimidation, and bullying. NIA's commitment is to take all reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against a person who has made a complaint of a breach of the policy.

### **Acceptable Behaviours**

Staff are encouraged to be courageous and speak up when they see any behaviour that negatively impacts a safe, caring, and orderly school, daycare, and workplace environment. People who are disciplined for unacceptable behaviour are encouraged to take steps to "put right" or repair the damage caused by their actions or behaviour. Connected to this idea, the community demonstrates commendable behaviour when we allow the disciplined individual/s who remain in the community to re-establish a positive character.

### **Unacceptable Behaviours**

Within this policy, there are four types of behaviour which, if found to be taking place, will be addressed as a disciplinary issue:

- Harassment: Any unwelcome or unwanted act or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating, or offensive to another person
- Intimidation: The act of instilling fear in someone as a means of controlling that person
- Bullying: A pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour with negative intent directed from one person to another where there is a power imbalance. Bullying can take many forms: verbal, physical, social, or electronic (cyberbullying). It can focus on disability, sexual orientation, and sexuality, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, or other issues.
- Violent behaviours: Any behaviour by an individual that threatens or actually harms or injures the individual or others or destroys property. Violent behaviour often begins with verbal threats but over time escalates to involve physical harm.

### **An Important Distinction Between Conflict, Mean Behaviour and Bullying**

It's important to know the difference between bullying and single acts of aggression or conflict. Not all mean or rude behaviour or conflict is bullying.

Understanding the difference helps when it comes to knowing how to intervene.

- 1) Conflict is a disagreement or difference between peers who have equal power
- 2) Mean behaviour is saying or doing something on purpose to hurt someone without consistency
- 3) Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that hurts others physically and/or emotionally.

For a situation to be considered a bullying incident, three indicators are usually present:

- **Power** – individuals who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the group
- **Frequency** – bullying is not a random act. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the child being bullied that can be so detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects
- **Intent to harm** – individuals who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other child

A person who shows bullying behaviour says or does something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse – even when it's obvious that they've hurt a person or when they're asked to stop. Bullying behaviour requires adult intervention at all stages of investigation, intervention and follow up.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

### **The Importance of Speaking Up**

Nanaimo Innovation Academy is committed to providing a safe, caring, and orderly school, daycare, and workplace environment that is respectful of everyone.

If someone is doing something that makes you feel unsafe, tell them to stop. Make it known to the harasser that their behaviour is unwelcome and offensive.

If a staff member has been harassed, intimidated, or bullied, or has witnessed such behaviour, they need to report it. It is part of their responsibility as a staff member at Nanaimo Innovation Academy. The situation will be thoroughly investigated.

### **Reporting an Incident**

1. When to report:  
Incidents or complaints should be reported as soon as possible after experiencing or witnessing an incident. This allows the incident to be investigated and addressed promptly. If this is a minor dispute, please see the ***Dispute Resolution Process Policy***.
2. How to report:  
Nanaimo Innovation Academy employee can report incidents or complaints of workplace bullying and harassment verbally or in writing. When submitting a written complaint, please use the workplace bullying and harassment complaint form (found in the back of the hours binder). When reporting verbally, the reporting contact, along with the complainant, will fill out the complaint form.
3. Reporting contact  
Report any incidents or complaints to the Program Manager. The Program Manager will then immediately report the incident or complaint to the Executive Director.
4. Alternate reporting contact:  
If the Program Manager is the person engaging in bullying and harassing behaviour, contact the Executive Director directly. [admin@nanaimoinnovation.org](mailto:admin@nanaimoinnovation.org)
5. Additional alternate reporting contact:  
If the Executive Director is the person engaging in bullying and harassing behaviour, contact the NIA Board of Director directly. [nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com](mailto:nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com)
6. What to include in a report:  
Provide as much information as possible in the report, such as the names of people involved, witnesses, where the events occurred, when they occurred, and what behaviour and/or words led to the complaint. Attach any supporting documents, such as emails, handwritten notes, or photographs. Physical evidence, such as vandalized personal belongings, can also be submitted.

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS POLICY**

#### **Child-Educator Disputes Involving Ongoing Behavioural Concerns**

1. In the first instance, the teacher will speak with the child privately, listen to the student's viewpoint, discuss expectations and brainstorm strategies together. The teacher may contact the parents/guardians to discuss the student's behavioural challenges, strategies, and expectations. This interaction should be reported to the Program Manager.
2. If there is a pattern of behaviour or ongoing occurrences, the teacher will advise the Program Manager and ED, and the child's parents/guardians will be called to set up a meeting. At this point a 'Care and Support Plan' may be put in place, as discussed and agreed upon by all parties. SEE CARE PLAN FLOW CHART (on staff web link)
3. The student's behaviour will be monitored and evaluated. A follow up meeting may be arranged to discuss and re-evaluate the 'Care and Support Plan'.

4. If the behaviour continues, NIA may seek support from external organizations such as the Child Development Centre (CDC), a family doctor, or other professional support.
5. If the behaviour risks the health, safety, and/or well-being of the staff or other children, we may need to suspend or cancel the fee agreement (see *Refund and Cancellation Policy*).

### **Employee, Parent, Board Members, And Volunteer Disputes With Each Other**

1. Employee, parents, NIA Board Members, and volunteers should first try to resolve any dispute informally. Discuss the issue first with the other party/parties directly involved, using the *Respectful Conduct Code* guidelines.
2. If initiating a respectful discussion is too difficult, a more formal approach may become necessary. NIA will provide a fair and reasonable mechanism for resolution.
  - Request assistance in resolving the issue from the ED, who may act as a mediator. The mediator's role is neutral to ensure that the communication is respectful and that both parties are heard.
  - The ED will speak with both parties separately.
  - The ED will then arrange to speak to both parties jointly.
  - Either party may request the presence of a support person.
  - If the dispute cannot be resolved, as a last resort, either party can appeal to the Board of Directors for them to weigh in on the conflict. The NIA Board must be emailed a letter from each party involved. They will issue a final decision on the matter based on the letters received and the report of the ED.
  - In the case of a dispute between Board Members, the other remaining Board Members will make the final decision.
  - The NIA Board of Director's email is [nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com](mailto:nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com)

### **Employee, Parent, And Volunteer Disputes With The Executive Director (ED)**

1. Employee, parents, and volunteers should first try to resolve any dispute informally with the ED. We recommend setting up a meeting with the ED to discuss the issue, using the *Respectful Conduct Code* guidelines. We also recommend including a Program Manager or HR Support person as a third party during this meeting.
2. If initiating a respectful discussion is too difficult, a more formal approach may become necessary. NIA will provide a fair and reasonable mechanism for resolution.
  - Request assistance in resolving the issue from the NIA Board of Directors, who will designate a NIA Board member as a mediator. The mediator's role is neutral to ensure that the communication is respectful and that both parties are heard.
  - The NIA Board member will speak with both parties separately.
  - The NIA Board member will then arrange to speak to both parties jointly.
  - Either party may request the presence of a support person.
  - If the dispute cannot be resolved during the meeting, the Board of Directors will issue a final decision on the matter based on the report of the NIA Board member designated to be a mediator.
  - The NIA Board of Director's email is [nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com](mailto:nanaimoinnovationboard@gmail.com)

## **WORKPLACE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES**

### **How and when investigations will be conducted**

Most investigations at Nanaimo Innovation Academy will be conducted internally. In complex or sensitive situations, an external investigator might be hired.

Investigations will:

- be undertaken promptly and diligently, and be as thorough as necessary, given the circumstances
- be fair and impartial, providing both the complainant and respondent equal treatment in evaluating the allegations
- be sensitive to the interests of all parties involved, and maintain confidentiality

- be focused on finding facts and evidence, including interviews of the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses
- incorporate, where appropriate, any need or request from the complainant or respondent for assistance during the investigation process

### **What will be included**

Investigations will include interviews with the alleged target, the alleged bully, and any witnesses. If the alleged target and the alleged bully agree on what happened, then Nanaimo Innovation Academy will not investigate any further, and will determine what corrective action to take, if necessary.

The investigator will also review any evidence, such as emails, handwritten notes, photographs, or physical evidence like vandalized objects.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Lea Barton, Office Manager and on the OH&S Committee, is responsible for ensuring workplace investigation procedures are followed. Workers are expected to cooperate with investigators and provide any details of incidents they have experienced or witnessed.

The Executive Director, Keely Freeman, will conduct investigations and create a written report with conclusions.

Alternatively, the NIA Board Chair may be required to conduct investigations and create a written report with conclusions. The NIA Board may designate an alternate investigator who will conduct the investigation and provide a written report with conclusions.

If external investigators are hired, they will conduct investigations and provide a written report with conclusions to the NIA Board.

### **Follow-up**

The alleged bully and alleged target will be advised of the investigation findings by the person responsible for conducting the investigation.

Following an investigation, the program manager will review and revise workplace procedures to prevent any future bullying and harassment incidents in the workplace. Appropriate corrective actions will be taken within a reasonable time frame.

In appropriate circumstances, workers may be referred to an employee assistance program or be encouraged to seek medical advice.

### **Record-keeping requirements**

Nanaimo Innovation Academy expects that workers will keep written accounts of incidents to submit with any complaints. Nanaimo Innovation Academy will keep a written record of investigations, any submitted evidence, findings and the conclusion report.

### **Annual review**

These procedures for bullying prevention, reporting and investigating will be reviewed annually. All workers will be provided with a copy as soon as they are hired, and copies will be available in the employee handbook section of the operations manual

### **Drugs/Alcohol**

Illegal or legal drugs of any kind must not be brought to the daycare. They can not be in your bag, in your pocket, or anywhere on the daycare premises.

Smoking, of any kind, is not permitted on the premises or within 50 feet of the premises at NIA.

Staff must not come to work under the influence of legal or illegal drug (unless prescribed by your doctor with a note that states it will not impair your judgement and ability to work with children).  
Staff must also not attend staff meetings under the influence of legal or illegal drug or under the influence of alcohol, this includes the scheduled zoom staff meetings.

Plan your events so that there is ample time to rest before coming to work. You need to be at your best for the children.

If you are suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol you will be asked to go home and NIA may decide to terminate your employment immediately.

If you bring medication to the daycare, make sure that it is in a childproof bottle, kept securely in your bag, and kept in the teacher cupboard in the kitchen.

## **THE SCHEDULE OF THE DAY**

### **Morning Drop Off**

Outdoors:

Outdoor morning drop offs are a great way to ensure that children have appropriate clothing for the day, especially if it is raining or very cold. You'd be surprised how many parents forget jackets or mittens. We also have parents put on their child's rain gear for them.

In the summertime, we ask that parents put on sunscreen at drop off.

Children should bring water bottles to the water bottle baskets at drop off. Most know to do this. Children keep their water bottle with us all week and we fill it up each morning. We wash everyone's water bottles daily. In the IT program we provide water bottles for the children and these are washed daily.

Heat and Cooling:

Most programs have their own heating/cooling controls. Please make sure it is turned off if you are opening the door or garage door.

When the weather changes to Fall and Summer temperatures, we turn the heat or air conditioning on in the main building. It takes a lot of energy (and money) to heat or cool the building. This means that we can no longer wedge open the doors or windows. Please make sure that you have an efficient system of getting the kids into and out of the building so that the door does not need to be open for prolonged periods of time.

During the heat, Oak IT will be using the big box fan. When using the big box fan steps to ensure the children's safety.

1. If children are in the playroom, the big box fan must be in the kitchen away from the fence.
2. If children are in the kitchen:
  - 2a) the big box fan must be in the playroom away from the fence
  - or
  - 2b) the big box fan must be on the counter, pushed far enough back that the children cannot reach it, with the cord tucked away.

In the kitchen, please make sure the over-the- stove fan is on when cooking any items with steam on the stove.

Music:

Throughout the day we have music playing. This is especially important around drop off. Types of music we play is typically classical, world music, or other instrumental music. Baroque music is known to be the most enhancing for a developing brain.

“Music affects your brain waves. Slower baroques, such as Bach, Handel, Vivaldi or Corelli, can create mentally stimulating environments for creativity and new innovations. Alpha brain waves originate from the occipital lobe during periods of relaxation.”

We avoid lyrics, for the most part. While we sing a lot of nursery rhymes and children songs, we do not play them on our speakers, unless there is a rare and special exception.

Please be aware of the volume of the music you are playing, although dance parties are a great activity at times, it is important to be respectful of the other programs and the neighbors of the daycare.

Greetings:

We greet all children and parents warmly by first name. Always say the child’s name before saying hello to the parent.

### **Transitioning Indoors**

We give a **five-minute** warning:

5 more minutes left to play, left to play, left to play, 5 more minutes, left to play and then we put the toys away.

Then a **one-minute** warning:

1 more minutes left to play, left to play, left to play, 1 more minutes, left to play and then we put the toys away.

Then a **tidy-up** time song:

Tidy up time, tidy up time, toys away, toys away, everybody helping, everybody helping, toys away, toys away.

Or

Tidy up time, tidy, tidy up time, tidy up time, put the toys away.

Kid Count:

Once the toys are away, we call line-up octopus! When all kids are lined up, we do a group count--- sometimes in English, Spanish, German, Japanese, Chinese, or French. We are open to more!

### **Hand Washing**

Children always wash hands after using the bathroom or getting a diaper change, and before and after eating snack or lunch. Hand washing is also accessible to children after messy activities, or if they feel the need. We teach children to wet their hands and then add a small amount of soap. They scrub their hand and then rinse. We encourage children to preserve water as much as possible and not leave the taps running for unnecessary amounts of time.

### **Food Program**

At NIA, we believe in the importance of diverse diet and fresh, whole foods. There is no doubt healthy eating impacts a child’s growth and development.

We provide fresh, whole foods prepared with care by our chef/nutritionist. We focus on vegetables and whole grain, nutrient dense foods. Providing a diverse menu ensures the children are getting adequate nutrients to support them and allow them to excel.

Children must always be served food items on a plate or napkin. Food must not be placed directly on a table.

All teacher and kitchen staff must know who in their program has a food sensitivity or allergy. If there is any question, the teacher must ask the kitchen before the food is served to children.

We encourage children to try everything at least once. Often after a few exposures they will begin enjoying the new foods. Alternately, there is always a backup option, which offers consistency and predictability to our less adventurous friends. **If children do not eat the main meal at all, they should be offered the back up by the teacher.** The children should not have to ask for themselves.

We also like to give thanks to all things and people that had to take place to create the food they are eating— Mother Earth, Farmers, Food growers, Food deliverers, and the Chef. In every program, we sing a song before every lunch to celebrate this.

Thank you for the food we eat  
Thank you for the work so sweet  
Thank you for the birds that sing  
Thank you earth for everything.

We explore our own garden and provide external farm tours to give children a hands-on experience as to where food comes from and how it grows. We have them check out the compost to learn about soil and the importance of healthy soil to grow food.

We want to help children to feel at home and safe. Eating together is a great way to do this.

All teachers should sit at the table and eat meals with the children. This is not only good modeling but also good relationship building. We provide food for staff but it will likely not be enough to fuel you for the whole day. Please plan to bring in some snacks too.

If a teacher's diet requires them to eat something different than what the children are eating, please ensure that they are still eating healthy foods while sitting at the table with the children. Explain the reasons if asked or warranted, but please be mindful to support the food the children are eating. Teachers may also choose to eat their personal foods during their break in the staff room or outside of the program area.

When it comes to table manners, the teacher models the use of kind words, please and thank you etc. Utensils are offered but we leave it up to the child whether or not they want to use them.

If a child prefers to kneel or stand while eating, that is ok, as long as they are eating safely at the table.

Here are some of the benefits:

- The quality of food is amazing. Everything is homemade with love.
- The variety of food that your child eats or gets to try is beneficial to their overall health and growing food palate.
- Children learn about culture through foods...and may try things that they may not ever get at home.
- The learning opportunities are great. Exploration in the Pre-K and Forest classrooms at least a couple of days a month teaching lessons about nutrition.
- The kids try foods based on communal eating, social engagement, and influence. The teachers model healthy eating choices and they learn from their peers.
- The children explore gardening and learn the work that goes into producing food to consume.
- It saves time for busy parents-- in the morning, grocery shopping, and coming up with new ideas/recipes

## **Indoor Free-Play**

We provide children with as much free play opportunity as we can. During free play all areas of the room are open, and children are encouraged to explore and discover as they wish. Teachers try not to interrupt the children's play, but are available to the children and engaged in the classroom environment in the case that the children need assistance or support. Ideally teachers can find an area to sit and observe the children's play so that they are most accessible and approachable to the children but are also able to safely scan the room for supervision.

This is a great time to make notes and take pictures for future documentation.

## **Table Tops**

In the Pre-K and Forest Programs, if it is your day to set up table tops, you need to ensure that there is:

1. A sensory activity
2. An art activity
3. An activity that works on fine motor skills
4. An activity directly related to topics that interest the children that week

When making playdough, always make a double batch and give half to the IT program.

In each program, there is someone scheduled daily to set up indoor and an outdoor activities, please check the daily summary sheet and be prepared for your task each day.

## **Outdoor Play**

All programs spend time outdoors in all (safe) weather. We spend as much time as we can outdoors and encourage children to explore and take risks. Ensure there are many gross motor activities provided outside for children and also provide drawing or blocks if they are looking for a calmer activity.

## **Together Time**

Together time is the time in the day where we are all in the same place and can engage in the same activity. In the Pre-K and Forest School Program, children are asked to sit on the mat and join together time, and teachers read the room on how long the children are able to be engaged (sometimes 30min sometimes only 5mins).

In IT, Together Time is optional, but if children do not want to be involved, they are asked to play quietly on the other side of the room so others can listen.

Teachers are assigned a Together Time day and are expected to be prepared in advance. Teachers are encouraged to bring in felt stories, books, and activities from home. Creativity is encouraged! New songs, ideas, games, and learning tools are always welcomed as this helps all of us learn from each other and add more diversity to the program.

## **Birthdays**

At NIA we acknowledge the children's birthdays at Together Time. We sing A Trip Around the Sun (Pre-K and Forest) or Happy Birthday (in IT), and then give an opportunity if the child would like to have a bit of a discussion about their birthday.

We only share pictures on Facebook if the child's parents have ordered a birthday cake.

## **Show And Tell**

In the Pre-K and Forest Pre-K Programs, each child gets assigned a show and tell day each month. We do our best not to schedule a show and tell on a day where we are celebrating a child's birthday.

We ask that children do not bring toys or items to the daycare except on their show and tell day. Sometimes things tend to sneak in. All items from home must be kept in the child's cubby for the day (except during show and tell). It can also be kept in a teacher area (the office or a cupboard) depending on what it is and how big it is.

In IT some children bring in comfort items. This is developmentally appropriate and if it is something they need to support their transition to daycare we fully support this.

'Show and Tell' typically happens during Together Time.

## **RISK AND SAFETY**

### **Excursions**

The Forest Pre-K Program class goes on daily excursions outside of the daycare. Pre-K goes on park walks which are scheduled on the monthly calendar. IT sporadically goes on neighborhood walks but do not attend the parks as there are none in the area a good size for the children.

If a program is leaving the daycare at any point and for any reason, they must communicate where they are going to the Office Manager and/or the Daycare Manager.

Excursion safety protocols are below.

### **Dangers in our Area:**

There are many unhoused people in Nanaimo. Some have significant mental health issues, some have significant drug addictions, and some are harmless. Always be on alert to maintain the safety of your group.

Scenarios:

- If someone is sleeping in a public park or near the public play area. Please call bylaws and police. Do not engage with them. You may or may not leave the play area, depending on the risk level.
- If someone is doing drugs, please stop and turn the other way. Head in a different direction. Please call bylaws and police.
- If someone is acting aggressively, get the children to safety as soon as possible. Then call 911.

If the children ask about unhoused people in our area, here are some suggestions to say:

- Not all people have a house. There are groups of people that work to help these people stay safe, fed, and dry.
- Everyone needs help from others. You have parents to help you. Some people need support from others to help them be safe and make safe choices.
- Even though we must be kind to everyone, we also need to make sure we are safe. If someone is not acting safe around us, we need to go to another location.

### **Supervision Protocols**

- Parents must officially sign their child in to the daycare on the appropriate program attendance sheet and bring their child in to the yard or building to hand over the child directly to a teacher.
- Teachers must always follow the appropriate teacher to child ratio while supervising children (as designated by VIHA- 8-1 for the 30-months to school age category and 4-1 for the under 36-month category).
- By 9am all staff must know the total number for the day and this must be communicated to the Office Manager (who communicates this to the kitchen and all other Program Managers). At this time, a teacher must double check that the children's attendance information is transferred over to the mobile Velcro board and indoor white board.

- Teachers must use the mobile Velcro board and indoor white board to account for the children inside and outside of the class. If the group is divided to different areas of the daycare, this must be accounted for on the mobile Velcro board and indoor white board.
- All staff are responsible for accounting for children at all times, do not rely on another staff, you should always be counting and aware of the number of children for yourself.
- Teachers must do regular head counts throughout the day to ensure children are accounted for. Special attention must be made during transitions.  
When exiting and entering the building, the children must be counted out loud by one teacher (counting may be done in any language but must be confirmed in English). All the teachers must count along. This number must be checked with the teacher holding the mobile Velcro board and another source for confirmation (attendance sheet or indoor white board).
- When a child is picked up, a teacher must talk with the parent to communicate about the child's day. The teacher signs out the child and ensures that the person who picked up the child is noted on the sheet. Then the mobile Velcro board and attendance sheet must be updated appropriately. Typically, the indoor white board does not need to be updated at the end of the day, as all the children are usually outside in the play yard for pick up.
- When on an excursion or fire drill, extra care needs to be taken in ensuring the children's safety and supervision. We never go on an excursion with only one teacher. There must be a maximum of 6-1 ratio in the 30-month to school age program for excursions, 7-1 in the Forest Program and 4-1 in IT (but 2-1 if not using a stroller).
- When preparing for an excursion, one teacher is assigned to ensure that mobile Velcro board and indoor white board are up to date. Before leaving the daycare premises, all the teachers must do one last count out loud to ensure that it matches the number on the mobile Velcro board held by the teacher.  
The IT program has two quad strollers. If there are children walking, they must hold a teacher's hand or rope at all times and be able to safely walk on the sidewalk.

### **Needles and Safety**

When doing park checks do not pick up dangerous items with your hands, even if gloved. Use a small broom and dustpan provided and sweep up. Dispose of the item in the sharps container.

#### **FIRST AID PROCEDURES**

If an accidental exposure or puncture happens, the following steps are to be followed by employees.

1. STOP what you are doing.
2. CLEANSE
  - Wash well with soap and water
  - Promote bleeding of a puncture wound by lowering extremity below level of the heart if possible.
  - DO NOT promote bleeding by cutting, crosshatch scratching or puncturing skin.
3. DISPOSE of the sharp or needle in a puncture proof sharps container.
4. REPORT to your supervisor immediately.
  - After first aid go to the Hospital Emergency Department immediately for medical assessment. Inform the physician that the incident is an occupational exposure (WCB Case) and where you are employed.
5. OBTAIN MEDICAL assessment, treatment and advice.
6. FOLLOW-UP: Provide information to your supervisor to assist in accident investigation and WCB reporting. Call Occupational Health Programs at 604-660-2587; and Fax copy of WCB forms to Occupational Health Programs at 604-775-0697.

### **Power Outage and Seasonal Risk**

POWER OUTAGE:

In the event of a power outage that extends for 1+ hours, NIA will close due to inability to use heat/AC, toileting, hot water, or play in reasonable light. We call hydro to see how long the outage may be. We notify families on our Facebook page after 30 minutes that we may call for pick ups.

#### HEAT WAVE:

In the event of a heat wave, we will close if we are unable to maintain a temperature of 26 degrees C or below indoors. If the temperatures outdoors are above 30 degrees C we will decrease our time outdoors and spend the outdoor time in shaded areas of the yard with access to water for the children to cool down.

#### SNOW/ COLD:

In the event of cold weather, we will not go outdoors in temperatures below -4 degrees C, but teachers may use their discretion and stay inside if the temperatures dip below 0 degrees C.

We follow the SD68 snow closure policy, but if schools are open and the daycare manager deems it unsafe or there is not enough staff available to work we may remain closed (see above for staff hours regarding this).

If the heat pump breaks, we can continue care as long as we can maintain a reasonable temperature, not too hot or too cold. The heat pump is located below the top part of the deck in the Pre-K yard and to help mitigate risk of damage, children and teachers are not to put anything on the top deck that has risk to fall through (pens, crayons, etc.)

#### WIND:

The Forest School Program must check the wind report for the area every day before going to the forest. We avoid forested areas with any wind reading over 25km.

However, there may be times in lower winds where we make an additional risk assessment based on recent weather conditions, the woodland canopy and the welfare needs of the group.

0. Calm - under 1km: smoke rises vertically
1. Light Air - 1-5km: direction shown by smoke drift but not by wind vanes
2. Light Breeze - 6-11km: wind felt on face; leaves rustle; wind vane moved by wind
3. Gentle Breeze - 12-18km: leaves and small twigs in constant motion; light flags extended
4. Moderate Breeze - 19-25km: raises dust and loose paper; small branches moved
5. Fresh Breeze - 26-35 mph: small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters. Above level five, you will begin to notice resistance while walking.
6. Strong Breeze - 36-45 km: large branches in motion; whistling heard in telegraph wires; umbrellas used with difficulty
7. After 45km, teachers will assess the situation and use their discretion. If wind gusts exceed 65km/h the children are to stay indoors due to safety.

#### AIR QUALITY:

If there are air quality warnings of above 6 for the region (due to wildfire, etc.), we do not go outside. If we do not go outside at all during the day, an incident report must be filed and families must sign off that they were notified. If a rating of over 6 persists for numerous days, we may close or reduce numbers due to an inability to keep that many children indoors over an extended period of time.

#### **Harmful Noise Level Policy**

Health Link BC notes prolonged noise at decibels of 85db and above can be harmful to one's hearing. In consideration of this, NIA will monitor perceived elevated noise levels inside and around the daycare. If the

levels reach 85db, we will move children either away from the source where it is below 85db, or to inside the building provided the noise is expected to last more than 1 minute.

In both the Pre-K and Infant/Toddler Programs we use sound machines to drown out the outside noise during rest time. The sound machines are placed at least 3 feet away from the sleeping children and the sound is kept below 50 decibels, as suggested by the American Pediatrics Association.

### Pillow Policy

During nap time, some children may use pillows to help them sleep. Children under the age of 18 months should not use pillows. However, most institutions recommend waiting until children are the age of two before using pillows. Based on this research, Nanaimo Innovation Academy staff must have parental permission for children between the ages of 18 months and three years to use a pillow. Parents must fill out a medical permission form.

### Biting Policy

Nanaimo Innovation Academy has friends of all ages and stages of development that attend each day. There can be times when children may resort to biting when dealing with big feelings. We understand that this is developmentally appropriate for young children. If a child is bitten while in our care, staff will fill out an incident report for both the child that got bit and the child that did the biting.

The child that was bit will receive first aid (usually an ice pack) and what level of comfort they wish from the staff. If the bite breaks the skin, the parents will be called right away so they have the option to pick up the child and potentially bring them for medical attention.

We will then talk to the child that did the biting about what we can do differently (i.e., use our words, ask for a teacher, etc.). If a child is having a rough day and is engaging in lots of biting (more than twice), they may be sent home if teachers are unable to regulate the child for the safety of the other children in our care. The Program Manager will put a Care Plan in place until the biting phase subsides.

## END OF THE DAY

### Cleaning And Closing Duties

Cleaning and closing duties are assigned differently in each program. They are listed on the checklist on the back of the summary sheet and need to be completed and **signed off** on every day. You must initial each individual duty and not just put a line through the boxes.

It is essential for the entire program that you are diligent in completing your assigned duties. Do not sign off on a duty unless it has been completed. If you do not sign off on a duty, it will be assumed that it was not completed. This communication is essential for maintaining the health and safety standards of the daycare. If you do not complete the tasks assigned to you, it affects your coworkers and entire flow of the program.

Staff clean as needed throughout the day besides the items on the daily checklist. The daycare can never be too clean. If you see something needs to get done (ie. Sweeping, quick spot mop, clean bathroom, dust, clean sink, etc) and you have the opportunity, please help out. We have a lot of surfaces and jobs, so any little bit helps.

Please ensure that all of the doors and windows are locked before setting the alarm to leave. Also make sure that you are the last person in the building, so not to lock someone inside who will set off the alarm. While staff and entrusted with a key and alarm code, staff must get approval from the daycare manager to enter the building outside of regular operational hours.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **Social Media**

#### WITH STAFF

Staff have created groups or platforms to easily communicate with each other. Check in with your team on the best ways to do this. If there is a platform being used by a program, all people in the program must be included and have access to it.

#### WITH PARENTS

Staff are encouraged to join our annual private Parent's Facebook Group. If they are uncomfortable using their personal profile, they can create a new personal 'work' profile or access it through the NIA staff profile.

If you are using your personal profile, please be aware of your settings. Parents may be able to view aspects of your life that you may not want to share with them.

If you would like to freely share your personal profile, that is your choice. If there are any concerns brought forward by a parent about your social media presence, it will be discussed with you and problem-solved appropriately.

### **Babysitting**

At NIA we do not babysit the children in our programs outside of childcare hours, to reduce the risk of conflicts of interest. After a child has left NIA, it is up to you if you would like to continue a relationship with the family for babysitting, friendship, or networking purposed.

It is ok to babysit for a current or past co-worker, as long as all parties feel comfortable with the arrangement.

### **Birthday Parties**

While working as a teacher, we form strong relationships with both the children in our care and their families. During their time in our care, children sometimes invite their teachers to their birthday parties. Teachers are more than welcome to attend the children's parties if they would like to. We ask that teachers remember that they are representing Nanaimo Innovation Academy and to please act responsibly and appropriately while attending the parties.

### **Donations to Daycare**

All donations not food related must go through the daycare manager, they need to be recorded and made sure they are appropriate for our program.

All food donations go through the Head Chef.

We need to know who they are from to accurately track them. This impacts our overall budget and year-end.

