

Delivery and Collection of Children

QA2 Health & Safety

Policy Statement

The Service protects the health, safety and well-being of children attending the Service by ensuring they are continuously under the care of their families, or those people authorised to deliver and collect them or educate and care for them.

A child will not be released from the Service other than in circumstances allowed by the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.

Rationale

Delivery and collection procedures optimise the safety and well-being of enrolled children and safeguard educators as they execute their duty of care to children and families. Strict adherence to delivery and collection procedures protects children's physical well-being and promotes emotional well-being. Planned handovers to and from parents or authorised nominees, provide the opportunity to share information that supports children's well-being and encourages the development of partnerships between families and educators.

Procedures

Arrival at the Service

Families are required to advise an educator of each child's arrival at the Service.

The parent or the authorised person delivering the child to the Service is required to complete the attendance record indicating the time the child arrives. When a child arrives at the Service from school the attendance record is completed by an educator.

Should a child require the administration of medication while at the Service the *Medication Record* must be completed as per the Administration of Medication policy. Medication must be handed to the responsible person upon arrival at the Service.

Families are encouraged to share information that may impact on service provision for their child. Educators encourage the use of areas away from children for the sharing of personal or private information.

Attendance records

Accurate arrival and departure documentation is a legislated requirement in all services approved by the Regulatory Authority and is necessary to claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

The parent or authorised person delivering the child to the Service is required to complete the attendance record indicating the time the child arrives. When a child arrives at the Service from school the attendance record is completed by an educator. In a circumstance where a parent or authorised person fails to sign a child into the Service, an educator should record the child's attendance including the arrival time.



Accurate attendance records support supervision, adherence to educator to child ratios and the implementation of efficient, emergency evacuation and lock down procedures.

If a child does not attend a booked session, the Service enters the absence on the attendance record. If absences exceed 42 days in a financial year, a statement or document confirming that the absences meet the criteria for additional absences must be obtained by the Service.

Departure of the Service

Educators are authorised to release an enrolled child from the premises only in the following circumstances:

- a parent/guardian or authorised nominee, recorded on the child's enrolment record, collects the child
- a parent/guardian or authorised nominee provides written authorisation for the child to leave the premises
- a parent/guardian or authorised nominee provides written authorisation for the child to attend an excursion
- the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance treatment, or there is another emergency.

No authorisation of a child under 16 years of age to collect a child will be accepted by the Service.

For the purpose of this policy 'parent' includes a guardian of the child and a person who has parental responsibility for a child under a court order. It does not include a parent prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child" (Guide to the National Quality Framework, p.383).

The parent or authorised nominee collecting a child is required to complete the attendance record, indicating the time the child leaves the Service, and is required to advise an educator prior to taking a child from the Service. For the purpose of electronic sign in, a person's unique sign in code is accepted as a signature.

Educators are required to sight photo identification before releasing a child to a person that is not known to them. This includes a parent or authorised nominee listed on the child's enrolment form. The educator is required to check the name on the identification against the list of approved persons to collect a child. Educators are unable to release a child to a person if they do not have identification, or if the identification does not match the authorisation list.

If an educator cannot confirm that a person trying to collect a child is authorised to collect the child, a parent of the child will be contacted for confirmation.

Concerns for the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Children

Should an educator be concerned for the safety of a child or consider that a person is in an unfit state to take responsibility for a child, they are authorised to exercise their duty of care by not allowing the child to be removed from the Service by that person. In this circumstance, the educator will contact an alternative person listed on the enrolment record.

Situations when this may occur include:

- when a parent or other person who is authorised to collect the child seems to be ill or affected by drugs or alcohol and does not appear to be able to safely care for the child;

- when a young person who is authorised to collect the child, for example a sibling, does not seem sufficiently mature to safely care for the child.

Procedure for late collection

For children not collected 30 minutes after closing time, the responsible person will contact the parents/guardians of the child, or another authorised or emergency contact person.

If these people are not available, the following will be contacted:

- Nominated Supervisor/director
- the Approved Provider
- relevant child protection agency and/or regulatory authority to advise them of the situation and consult on what action to take.

In the interests of protecting educators from allegations of abuse, where possible two adults will remain at the Service with the child. If it is decided that only one educator can stay with the late child, it is important to ensure someone else is on hand to aid if necessary.

If the educators present are unable to remain at the Service to care for the child, the responsible person will attempt to contact a suitably qualified responsible person to provide relief. If no relief can be arranged, then the relevant child protection agency will be contacted for advice.

Educators will provide for the child's needs (i.e. provide a snack or evening meal) and reassure the child, provide activities while they wait and, if appropriate, settle the child down to sleep.

When the parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives to collect the child, they must complete and sign a Late Collection Form, which indicates the time of collection and confirms their understanding that a late fee will be charged.

Educators will advise the Department of Communities, Education and Care Regulatory Unit and police (if contacted), and the nominated supervisor/director or approved provider that the child has been collected.

Ongoing strategies for late collection

The policy on *Delivery and Collection of Children* will be highlighted to parents at the time of enrolment and will be provided in writing on request.

The Service will ask families to update their own, and their emergency contact, numbers as they change. A system of regular reminders will be implemented through the Service newsletter, notices in the entry area, a reminder on the family's fee receipts, a letter to parents, or other means.

Families will be encouraged to name additional emergency contacts, who they expect would be available and able to assist in an emergency. This could include trusted neighbours, if the family does not have relatives or friends on hand to assist.

The policy will be reviewed regularly with educators, and agreement reached as to how the staffing of late collections will be managed. Management understands that an educator's personal situation may limit their ability to remain at the Service after hours and will not impose pressure on educators to unwillingly take on these extra duties. Any extra hours worked by employees will be paid as overtime.

Late fees will apply. \$5 per 5 minutes.



Where families are continually late to collect children, the following process will be followed to address continuing issues.

- The Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will speak with the parent to alert them to the grievance process, and to discuss any difficulties the parent is experiencing in collecting their child by closing time. Strategies for the parent to adhere to the Service hours will be discussed, and the parent will be asked to give a commitment to implementing these strategies.
- Where the strategies are not followed, care may be ceased.

Unauthorised departure from the Service

Should a child leave the premises unaccompanied, or with a person not authorised in writing by the child's parent, the child will be treated as a missing child. The child's parent will be notified immediately, and the Education and Care Regulatory Unit notified as soon as practicable. Educators are to refer to the *Supervision Policy*, 'Missing Child' procedure.

References

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA]. (2012), *Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012*. NSW.

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ACECQA. (2018). *National Quality Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>

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