

Delivery and Collection of Children

POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Our organisation is committed to the safe delivery and collection of children. We have detailed procedures to ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is of primary importance. We will ensure that appropriate measures are in place to protect children from any harm or hazard, including providing adequate supervision and preventing the entry of unauthorised persons.

BACKGROUND

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place in relation to the delivery of children to, and collection from, the service premises.

LEGISLATION

- National Law Act – 165, 167, 170
- National Regulations – 86, 87, 99–102, 122, 123, 157, 158, 160, 161, 165, 168, 170, 171, 172
- National Quality Standard – 2.2, 3.1, 4, 6, 7.1

RELEVANT POLICIES

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| • Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations | • Health, Safety and Wellbeing |
| • Administration of First Aid | • Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness |
| • Anaphylaxis Management | • Providing a Child-Safe Environment |
| • Enrolment and Orientation | • Safe Arrival of Children |
| • Excursions | • Safe Transportation of Children |
| • Governance and Management | • Staffing Arrangements |

LOCATION OF INFORMATION

- Centre Policy and Procedure Handbook
- Kids on Mullum Child Care Centre Website

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is required to be reviewed at least annually by the approved provider, in conjunction with nominated supervisors, responsible persons, staff, families and children.

- Dates of Review: January 2025
January 2024
January 2023
January 2022

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PROCEDURES

SAFE DELIVERY OF CHILDREN TO THE SERVICE

- Families must leave their child with a staff member when dropping them off to the service or notify staff that their child has arrived.
- Families must notify the service if someone else is dropping off their child. The nominated supervisor or responsible persons will then document the person's name on the enrolment form and on the service's customer management software.
- All children need to be signed in by a parent, guardian or authorised nominee.
- Should the parent, guardian or authorised nominee dropping the child off forget to sign their child in, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons will sign the child in.
- Children are to be sighted by a staff member before the parent, guardian or authorised nominee leaves. This ensures that staff are aware that the child has arrived and is in the building.
- A child's medication needs, or any other important or relevant information, should be passed onto staff by the person delivering the child. Staff will assist the parent, guardian or authorised nominee to complete a medication record and store the medication appropriately, away from children's reach.
- In order for children to feel secure and safe, it is important that children and families are greeted upon arrival by staff and have the chance to say goodbye to the person dropping them off.
- In the case of a separated family, either biological parent is able to add contacts in writing unless a court order is provided to the service stating that one parent has sole custody and responsibility.
- Parents, guardians or authorised nominees who arrive before the service operating hours must remain with the child until the service officially opens and sufficient numbers of staff are on duty.
- In the unlikely event that an opening staff member is detained leaving only one staff member to open the service alone, families must remain with their children until a second staff member arrives on duty.
- Families may visit their child or contact the service at any time throughout the day to check on their progress and see if they have settled. The organisation has an open-door policy for families.
- Families may drop off their child at any time during opening hours.

SAFE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN FROM THE SERVICE

- A child is only permitted to leave the service premises if:
 - they are given into the care of a parent, guardian or an authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record, or a person authorised by the parent, guardian or authorised nominee.

- they leave in accordance with the written authorisation of the child's parent, guardian or authorised nominee.
 - they are taken on an excursion, routine outing or on transportation provided or arranged by the service, with written authorisation from the parent, guardian or authorised nominee.
 - they are given into the care of a person, or taken outside the premises, because the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment, or because of another emergency, *e.g., bushfire, flood.*
- Families must collect their child from a staff member when collecting them from the service or notify staff that they have arrived to collect their child, and again when they are leaving the service premises with their child.
 - Children will only be released to parents, guardians or authorised nominees stated in writing on the child's enrolment form.
 - Families must notify the service if someone else is picking up their child. The nominated supervisor or responsible persons will then document the person's name on the enrolment form and on the service's customer management software.
 - Staff are required to ask any unfamiliar visitors to show photo identification, *e.g., driver's license*, in order to collect a child from the service. Identification is to be checked against the authorisations in the child's enrolment record prior to a child being collected from the room.
 - If someone other than a parent, guardian or authorised nominee arrives to collect a child, and the service has not been informed, staff will immediately contact the parents or guardians for authorisation. The child must remain at the service until authorisation is provided by a parent, guardian or authorised nominee to the nominated supervisor or responsible persons.
 - All persons collecting a child must be 18 years or older. This applies without exemption to siblings of the child in care.
 - The organisation may refuse an authorised person to collect a child from the service if:
 - The person is not currently nominated as an authorised nominee.
 - The person is prohibited by any court order relating to the child from having contact with the child (*unless written authorisation has been given by the custodial parent or guardian*).
 - The person poses a risk to the safety of the child in question, or to the children, staff and families of the service.
 - The person is under the age of 18 years.
 - The person does not appear to be fit to take care of the child, *e.g., they are affected by drugs or alcohol.*
 - Where the person arriving to collect the child cannot collect due to unforeseen circumstances, verbal authorisation for another person to collect the child can be accepted, but must be received by two staff members.
 - Families may collect their child at any time during opening hours.
 - If a parent, guardian or authorised nominee removes a child from the service during the day for an appointment, they must sign the child out and sign the child back in when the child returns to the service.
 - Any situation where the person collecting the child presents a situation that may be detrimental to the child's safety or welfare should be documented by staff. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - where the person collecting the child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - unsafe transport practices

- concerns regarding care or protection of children.
- Staff should take reasonable steps to address the situation before releasing the child, but without putting themselves or other children in their care at risk. Strategies include, but are not limited to:
 - Bring the matter to the person's attention and attempt to persuade them to seek an alternate course of action, e.g., *contact an alternative authorised nominee to collect the child instead.*
 - Allow the parent, guardian or authorised nominee to collect the child, but in consultation with the nominated supervisor or responsible persons, subsequently notify the appropriate authorities, e.g., *police, child protection.*

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT KIOSKS

- Families must sign in or out on the kiosks located in the foyer, upon arrival and departure from the service.
- Each parent, guardian or authorised nominee on the collection list must use their own personal phone number and PIN number.
- Parents, guardians and authorised nominees are able to set up a PIN number to use at the kiosk each time they arrive or depart. This is for their own personal use only.
- Attendance records are used in case of emergencies and for the calculation of Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

- The organisation will ensure that a record of attendance is kept for the service that:
 - Records the full name of each child attending the service.
 - Records the date and time the child arrives and departs.
 - Is signed by the person who delivers or collects the child, or in the circumstance that a family forgets to sign the record, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons.
- Staff will regularly review the attendance records throughout the day to ensure accuracy at all times.
- Should the parent, guardian or authorised nominee dropping the child off forget to sign their child in, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons will sign the child in.
- Prior to closing the service, two staff members must verify all children have been signed out of the service. If a child is not signed out, staff will check all areas of the service and look for clues such as bags remaining in lockers, to ensure no child remains.
- Children confirmed as absent for the day will be marked as absent on attendance records.

LATE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

- If a child has not been picked up by the service's closing time, staff will immediately contact the child's parents, guardians and/or authorised nominees listed on the enrolment form.
- If staff are unable to contact any of the child's authorised contact persons, they should contact the nominated supervisor or responsible persons who will give further instructions.
- Details of all calls must be recorded, including time of phone calls, person tried to contact, etc. Staff should thoroughly document all steps.

- If by 30 minutes after the official closing time, staff are unable to locate any authorised persons, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons must be updated so they can make necessary arrangements. Two staff members should remain at the service pending further advice.
- Staff must continue attempting to contact parents, guardians and all authorised nominees in order to find someone to collect the child.
- If by 8:00pm, staff have not been able to contact parents, guardians or authorised nominees, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons must contact the *'After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service'* on 13 12 78. When a representative of child protection arrives, they will take responsibility for the child.
- Under no circumstances are staff to take a child from the service in an attempt to find a parent, guardian or authorised nominee, or to care for the child in their own home.
- Families must notify the service if late collection may occur. There is a late fee after 6.30pm of \$2.00 every minute, per child, which is equally divided between staff doing overtime. The late fee also occurs for any minute after 4:00pm on our Christmas early closure dates.

REMOVAL OF CHILDREN FROM THE SERVICE BY STAFF

- Staff cannot remove a child from the premises without written consent from parents or guardians, with the exception of a medical emergency where the child needs to be attended to by a doctor or dentist, or to receive medical attention in an ambulance or at a hospital.
- Emergency consent is written into the enrolment forms, which the legal parent or guardian must sign upon commencement at the service.
- In the above circumstances, parents, guardians and/or authorised nominees will be notified immediately to meet the child at the proposed destination.
- A staff member with current first aid qualifications must be present on the escorted journey from the service.
- Whilst the organisation does not participate in excursions or routine outings outside of the service, in the unlikely event that children were to be removed from the service premises, a risk assessment would be conducted. This would include a determination as to whether there is adequate adult supervision for the excursion or routine outing.
- Staff will refrain from taking children out of the service to help families place their children into cars and/or car seats, to avoid the risk of doing this incorrectly.

LOCK-IN OR LOCK-OUT INCIDENTS

- At the end of each day, staff must check indoor and outdoor premises including all rooms and storage rooms, beds and cots, to ensure that no child remains on the premises after the service closes.
- Locked-in or locked-out incidents are more likely to happen:
 - between 4 and 6 pm
 - during pickup and drop off
 - during excursions, routine outings and transition times
 - in outdoor play areas
 - on transport
 - in bathroom and toilet areas
 - in sheds

- to younger (2–3-year-old) male children
- Examples of when children could be mistakenly locked in or out of a service premises or in any part of the premises include being:
 - locked in a shed or storeroom
 - asleep in a cot, staff leaving and the service closing for the day
 - locked in a bus after being collected from home or attending an excursion.
- Ensure active and effective supervision at all times – with a particular focus on late afternoons, transitions, drop off and pick up times, excursions, less frequented areas of the service, and younger children.
- Ensure educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times.
- Conduct regular headcounts and/or attendance checks of children.
- Ensure compliance with legal requirement to account for, check and record, children embarking and disembarking transportation.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS AND COURT ORDERS

- The service must keep current copies of any custody arrangements, court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans. These are to remain in a lockable cupboard or filing cabinet in the office, and also on display in the staff room.
- The organisation must comply with any legally binding written instructions regarding custody arrangements or court orders and to make every effort to ensure the safety and security of the children whilst attending the service.
- Families must provide the service with copies of current custody arrangements, court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans, before the service can comply with them.
- Families must provide the service with copies of current custodial and court order documentation and written instructions which will be placed in the child's personal file.
- Families and staff should inform the nominated supervisor or responsible persons of any current information that may assist with any problems.
- All staff will be informed on any custody arrangements and court orders so they are aware of the instructions regarding that family's arrangement.
- If a non-custodial family member arrives to collect a child, staff will:
 - Contact the nominated supervisor or responsible persons immediately.
 - Contact the custodial parent or guardian.
 - Outline the situation to the non-custodial family member, out of the view of other children and families, if possible.
 - If possible, keep the child away from the situation.
 - If the non-custodial family member becomes aggressive or abusive, the police will be called immediately.
 - Staff are not to place themselves in danger by physically attempting to restrain a person.
- Staff will not be expected to physically prevent any person from leaving the service. In these such cases, the custodial parent or guardian will be contacted along with the local police and appropriate authorities. Where possible, staff will provide police with the make, colour, and

registration number of the vehicle being driven by the unauthorised person, and the direction of travel when they left the service.

COMMUNICATION

- Staff must endeavor to be responsive to the needs of children & families at arrival and departure times. Families can use arrival and departure times to exchange information with staff.
- Should families require longer conversations regarding their child's care or progress, these should be conducted via phone or email where possible.
- If a family has any concerns that need discussion at length, an appointment may need to be made with staff at a more suitable time.
- In the event that families have other children in their care at arrival and departure times, they must remain in the care of the family at all times, and are not the responsibility of the service or staff.

CHILDREN LEFT IN CARS

In Victoria, it is an offence for a person responsible for a child to leave the child unattended for any longer than is reasonable, without making appropriate arrangements for the child's supervision and care. This includes leaving a child unattended in a car.

- Children left in cars are at risk of heatstroke and dehydration.
- Large cars heat up as quickly as smaller cars. Leaving the windows down has little effect on the inside temperature of the car.
- A child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adults. Even on a mild day, the temperature inside a parked car can be 20 to 30 degrees hotter than the temperature outside. When it's 30 degrees outside, a child could be suffering in up to 60-degree heat.
- There are some steps that people can work into daily routines to help lower the risk of inadvertently leaving a child in a hot car (known as fatal distraction):
 - open the back door of the car every time you park, even if there is no one in the back seat.
 - place a child's bag or cuddly toy in the front seat as a reminder.
 - leave a bag, phone or wallet in the back seat of the car.
 - use a mirror for rear facing car seats.
 - create a mental list of things to check each time you leave the car, e.g., baby, keys, wallet and phone.
 - install electronic controls that create an audio reminder.

ROAD SAFETY

- The organisation will embed road safety into the curriculum, including talking with children about:
 - holding an adult's hand when near the road or in a carpark.
 - reminding the adult with them not to be on their mobile phone.
 - walking the safest route to the car.
 - getting into the car via the safe side or safety door (the curb side).
 - wearing bike helmets when cycling to and from the service.
- Families must be provided with general road safety information, including local speed limits, driveway safety, child restraints, not leaving children alone in cars, parking safely, locking their car, etc.

- Where a parent, guardian or authorised nominee is observed not using a child restraint, using the wrong child restraint, using a child restraint inappropriately or engaging in other unsafe behaviours such as parking illegally or not using a bicycle helmet, staff should:
 - talk with the family member about the importance of safe transport procedures, including the correct use of child restraints and/or relevant road safety behaviours.
 - inform the nominated supervisor or responsible persons.
- If the parent, guardian or authorised nominee persists with unsafe road use behaviours staff must notify the nominated supervisor or responsible persons, who should:
 - contact the person directly and discuss the importance of child restraint use and/or safe road user behaviour, including legal requirements and implications.
 - follow up with the person, where required, to ensure that they have the most appropriate restraint for their child and that it is being used correctly.
 - report the matter to the local police on **000** if the child is in immediate danger.

SERIOUS INCIDENTS

- If a child requires hospitalisation, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons are to contact the regulatory authority via the NQAITS Portal within 24 hours.
- In case of a death of a child in care, the nominated supervisor or responsible persons must immediately give notice of the fact to:
 - The parent or guardian of the child.
 - The approved provider of the service.
 - The police.
 - The regulatory authority within 24 hours.
- The National Law requires the regulatory authority to be notified of any serious incident at an approved service. A serious incident includes:
 - the death of a child while attending a service, or following an incident while attending a service.
 - any incident involving injury, trauma or illness of a child where medical attention was sought, or should have been sought.
 - an incident at the service premises where the attendance of emergency services was sought, or should have been sought.
 - when a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for.
 - when a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service premises in a way that breaches the National Regulations, or is mistakenly locked in or locked out of any part of the service premises.
- A serious incident should be documented on an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record* as soon as possible, and within at least 24 hours of the incident.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that an attendance record is kept with each child's name, the date and time they arrive and depart, and the signature of the person who delivers or collects the child. • Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are completed and all relevant actions are undertaken in relation to any period in which children are travelling between the service and any other service which provides education or care to children. • Ensure procedures are in place so children only leave the service premises with authorised people or in an emergency.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that an enrolment record is kept for each child which contains authorisations from families. • Ensure all supervision requirements are met during delivery of children to, and collection from, the service premises, including relevant educator to child ratios. • Ensure children are adequately and actively supervised at all times. • Keep a written record of all visitors to the service, including time of arrival and departure. • Notify the regulatory authority of any serious incident within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident. • Ensure that a parent or guardian is notified as soon as practicable if their child is involved in a serious incident. • Read, understand, follow and enforce the organisation's policies and procedures.
Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that an attendance record is kept with each child's name, the date and time they arrive and depart, and the signature of the person who delivers or collects the child. • Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are completed and all relevant actions are undertaken in relation to any period in which children are travelling between the service and any other service which provides education or care to children. • Ensure procedures are in place so children only leave the service premises with authorised people or in an emergency. • Ensure that an enrolment record is kept for each child which contains authorisations from families. • Ensure all supervision requirements are met during delivery of children to, and collection from, the service premises, including relevant educator to child ratios. • Ensure children are adequately and actively supervised at all times. • Keep a written record of all visitors to the service, including time of arrival and departure. • Inform the approved provider within 12 hours if a child has left the service with an unauthorised person, is missing, cannot be accounted for, or has been mistakenly locked in or out of the service. • Notify the regulatory authority of any serious incident within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident. • Ensure that a parent or guardian is notified as soon as practicable if their child is involved in a serious incident. • Ensure the kiosk is set up and in working order before opening time. If system is not working, ensure families have a paper version to record their child's attendance. • Check photo identification when unfamiliar persons arrive to collect children. • Review kiosk to ensure all children have been successfully signed in/out regularly throughout the day. • Contact the 'After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service' if it is after 8:00pm, and a child has not been collected and their parent, guardian or authorised nominee cannot be contacted. • Ensure doors and gates into the service are kept closed during opening hours. • Refuse an authorised person if they do not meet the requirements for authorisation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff on the process to follow if an unauthorised person arrives to collect a child. • Promote an open-door policy to families. • Keep current copies of any custody arrangements, court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans and inform staff of these documents. • Communicate any changes to children's delivery and collection arrangements to staff and families. • Read, understand, follow and enforce the organisation's policies and procedures.
Educators and Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that attendance records are completed with each child's name, the date and time they arrive and depart, and the signature of the person who delivers or collects the child. • Ensure children only leave the service premises with authorised people or in an emergency. • Maintain relevant educator to child ratios at all times. • Ensure children are adequately and actively supervised at all times. • Inform the nominated supervisor or responsible persons within 12 hours if a child has left the service with an unauthorised person, is missing, cannot be accounted for, or has been mistakenly locked in or out of the service. • Ensure that a parent or guardian is notified as soon as practicable if their child is involved in a serious incident. • Ensure the kiosk is set up and in working order before opening time. If system is not working, ensure families have a paper version to record their child's attendance. • Check photo identification when unfamiliar persons arrive to collect children. • Review kiosk to ensure all children have been successfully signed in/out regularly throughout the day. • Contact the nominated supervisor or responsible persons, if a child has remained at the service after closing time, and parents, guardians and/or nominees cannot be contacted. • Remain at the service until a child is collected after closing time. • Ensure doors and gates into the service are kept closed during opening hours. • Refuse an authorised person if they do not meet the requirements for authorisation. • Promote an open-door policy to families. • Be aware of any custody arrangements, court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans. • Ensure families are acknowledged at arrival and departure times and opportunities for sharing information are provided. • Be available for individual greeting and settling of children. • Provide a supportive and welcoming environment for children and families to assist with separation and settling. • Check indoor and outdoor premises including all rooms and storage rooms, beds and cots, to ensure that no child remains on the premises after the service closes. • Read, understand, follow and enforce the organisation's policies and procedures.

Parents, Guardians and Families

- Provide authorisations in their child's enrolment form and ensure the information is kept up-to-date.
- Complete the attendance record when their child arrives and leaves with the child's name, the date and time they arrive and depart, and their signature.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the child's presence before leaving the service at drop-off time.
- Ensure that staff are aware that their child is being collected before leaving the service at pick-up time.
- Present photo identification when asked by staff to confirm identity as an authorised person.
- Provide written authorisation when children require medication to be administered by staff.
- Notify the service if they are likely to be late collecting their children.
- Pay a late collection fee if their child is at the service after closing time.
- Supervise their own child before signing them into the service and after they have signed them out of the service.
- Supervising other children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service.
- Ensure doors and gates into the service are kept closed during opening hours.
- Ensure their child is not left unattended at the service at any point in time.
- Ensure their child travels in an appropriate and approved restraint suitable for their age and weight when arriving and departing the service.
- Comply with road and car park safety requirements when arriving and departing from the service.
- Ensure their children and/or pets are never left in the car alone at any time.
- Provide the service with copies of current custody arrangements, court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans.
- In the unlikely event that an opening staff member is detained leaving only one staff member to open the service alone, remain with their child until a second staff member arrives on duty.
- Read, understand and follow the organisation's policies and procedures.

SOURCES

- ACECQA – *Active Supervision: Ensuring Safety and Promoting Learning* – July 2023
- ACECQA – *Delivery of Children To, and Collection From, Education and Care Service Premises* – July 2023
- ACECQA – *Minimising the Risk of Children Being Mistakenly Locked In or Out of Service Premises* – January 2023
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 – September 2023
- Department of Education and Training
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 – July 2023
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – July 2023
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 – July 2023
- Starting Out Safely – *Keeping Children Safe when they Arrive & Leave Your Service* – 2018