Delivery and Collection of Children

**Rationale and Policy Considerations**

All children have the right to experience quality care in an environment which provides for their health and safety. The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 requires that approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm. Ensuring that children are only released to authorized persons is a key aspect of children's safety.

**Philosophy**

Documented approach to provision of a safe environment for children; approach to educator/staff professionalism and responsible conduct.

**Legislation and Government Requirements**

State/Territory laws relating to child protection

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic) (or corresponding legislation)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

**Children's needs**

Arrival and departure routines to be relaxed and happy and transitions from the service to home protect the child’s wellbeing.

**Families’ needs**

Delivery and collection of their child to be stress free and provide reassurance that their child will be safe and not be released to unauthorised people; clear late pick up procedures; understanding if they are unavoidably delayed.

**Educator/Staff needs**

Time to discuss matters with families at the beginning and end of the day; clear guidelines to follow in the event that a child is not collected when expected; their own commitments after normal work hours not to be compromised; overtime pay.

**Management needs**

Parents to take responsibility for their child and not to misuse the services offered by the service; dependable staff; support from relevant agencies and departments

**National Quality Framework**

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic) – Section 3(2)(a); 165; 167; 175; 189*

*Education and Care Services National Regulations: 99; 158 – 159; 168 (2)(f); 176*

*National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Nov 2010) – Standard 2.3; Element 2.3.1; Element 2.3.2.*

*Early Years Learning Framework for Australia – Practice: Holistic approaches; Responsiveness to children – Outcomes: 3*

*Framework for School Age Care in Australia – Practice: Holistic approaches; Collaboration with children – Outcomes: 3*
Policy Statement

The education and care service ensures that the attendance of all children enrolled in the service is accurately recorded in accordance with regulatory and government guidelines. Families are required to personally deliver and collect their children, or arrange with the service for an authorized person to do so. The service’s procedures for delivery and collection must be followed in every instance, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

The service will ensure the protection of children not collected by closing time. Families are expected to abide by service hours, except in an extreme emergency. The service is unable to provide care to children after hours on a regular basis.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

Arrival at the service

- On arrival at the service families/children must report directly to the educator to signal their arrival at the service. Young children must be handed directly to the child’s educator. Children leaving school must report to the bus supervisor if they are taking the service bus to the service; or to an educator when they arrive at the service.
- Educators will welcome families and children on arrival and seek to engage them in the day’s planned activities.
- Any personal items must be put inside the child’s bag, which should be stored or hung up in the nominated area.
- Any medications must be given directly to the educator who will check the family has completed an Authority to Administer or Self Administer Medication Form and then store the medication in the appropriate place.
- Educators and families or children may need to exchange information at this time in preparation for arriving at or departing from the service. If this exchange of information involves discussions about private or personal details, the discussion will take place in a private area in accordance with the service’s Confidentiality/Privacy policy.

Attendance record

- Accurate attendance records will be kept and checked each day.
- The enrolling parent/guardian or authorised person who brings the child to the service or collects the child from the service must sign/initial the child’s times of arrival and departure.
- When a child arrives at the service unaccompanied by the parent (e.g. where a child is collected after attending school) educators/staff will note the time of arrival or departure. The parent/guardian or authorised person (not service educators/staff) will later note and sign/initial the child’s times of arrival and departure.
- If a child does not attend for any reason the service will enter the type of absence on the attendance record or allowable absence record and the parent/guardian must verify the absence by signing/initialling the attendance record and providing the necessary documentation at a later date.
- Families who do not complete the attendance records will not be eligible to claim Child Care Benefit.

Authorisation for collecting children

- The names and contact numbers of all persons authorised to collect children from the service must be included on the Enrolment Form. Any changes to these authorities must be advised in writing to the service by the enrolling parent/guardian as soon as possible.
- If the enrolling parent/guardian arranges for an authorised person to collect their child from the service, they must contact the service to advise of this arrangement and confirm who will collect the child.
If the service has not been notified and someone other than the enrolling parent/guardian arrives to collect the child the nominated supervisor/educator will contact the enrolling parent/guardian to obtain their authorisation which will be in writing wherever possible. The child will not be released until the enrolling parent/guardian’s authorisation has been obtained. If the authorised person is not known to the service, the enrolling parent/guardian will be asked to provide a description of the person concerned, who will also be required to provide proof of their identity.

Late collection

- The services hours of opening are clearly displayed at the entry to the service.
- Parents/guardians who are unavoidably detained and are unable to collect their child at the negotiated collection time must telephone the service to advise of their lateness and expected time of arrival. If a parent/guardian is unable to collect their child prior to closing they should arrange for another authorised adult to collect the child and advise the service of this arrangement. This advice should be in writing if at all possible.
- Special circumstances i.e. traffic accident or vehicle breakdown, will be given consideration in relation to the administration of late collection fees.
- If the parent/guardian has not contacted the service and the child has not been collected 10 minutes after the negotiated collection time, the service will attempt to telephone the parent/guardian or if this is not possible telephone the emergency contact people listed on the child’s enrolment form to arrange for the child’s immediate collection.
- If no-one can be contacted and the child has not been collected 30 minutes after the service's normal closing time educators will follow the Procedure for Late Collection.
- When a parent/guardian is continually and regularly late arriving at the service to collect their child, the nominated supervisor/coordinator/educator will discuss other child care options with the family.

Procedure for late collection

- If a child has not been collected 30 minutes after closing time, and the parents/guardians of the child, nor other emergency contact person has been able to be contacted, the senior educator/staff member present will contact:
  - the approved provider (or nominated supervisor/scheme coordinator), and
  - relevant child protection agency and/or regulatory authority (if this is part of the service’s late collection action plan),
  - to advise them of the situation and consult on what action to take.
- The service will develop a Late Collection Action Plan which should include:
  - Time lines and triggers for ongoing communication between the service and the approved provider/scheme coordinator/child protection agency/regulatory authority, i.e. after an agreed period of time, or when something happens to change the situation (i.e. parent/guardian arrives).
  - Whether the service should contact the police.
  - What actions the approved provider/scheme coordinator/child protection agency/regulatory authority will take.
  - The service's availability to continue to care for the child, i.e. the length of time educators are available to stay at the service, concerns regarding the security of the premises after hours etc.
  - Who else the service needs to contact in regard to the situation.
In the interests of protecting educators from allegations of abuse, where possible two adults will remain at the service with the child. The decision on whether two staff need to be present will depend on some or all of the following considerations:

- Security in the area in which the service is located
- The cost of having two educators present
- The experience of the educators
- The child and his/her specific needs

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 provide assistance if necessary.

If the educators present are unable to remain at the service to care for the child, the nominated supervisor/coordinator will follow the service’s agreed action plan for staffing late collections, that will ensure the wellbeing of the child. This could include any of the following:

- Educators who have agreed to make themselves available will be contacted and asked to relieve present educator as soon as they are able.
- The nominated supervisor/scheme coordinator or approved provider/management committee will send a representative to relieve one of the present educators as soon as possible (whilst ensuring educator requirements are maintained).

The child protection agency/regulatory authority will be contacted as agreed in the Late Collection Action Plan, to provide on-going updates of the situation as it evolves.

The service may decide to contact the police to find out if the parent has been involved in an accident, or to ask the police to take action to try to locate the parent/guardian.

Educators will care for the child’s needs (i.e. provide a snack or evening meal) and reassure the child if he/she is anxious, provide the child with some fun games or activities and, if appropriate, settle the child down to sleep (young children).

When the parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives to collect the child they will be required to 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 child protection agency/regulatory authority/police (if contacted), and the nominated supervisor/scheme coordinator or approved provider/management committee that the child has been collected.

Ongoing strategies

- The policy on delivery and collection of children will be highlighted to parents at the time of enrolment, and 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.

- Families are required to plan their day in order to ensure they are at the service prior to closing time. Educators may need time to give parents/guardians information about their child’s day. Educators also have evening commitments they wish to fulfil.

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

The nominated supervisor/coordinator/educator 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 service hours will be discussed, and the parent will be asked to give a commitment to implementing these strategies.

On the next late collection (the service will need to decide on the time frame for this i.e. within 2 weeks, 1 month, or more), a letter will be sent to the parent advising them that another late collection of their child will result in cancellation of their place at the service.

If there is a further late collection (within the service’s time frame) the family's enrolment will be cancelled.

Where a number of families are continually late the service may consider surveying parents to see if there is sufficient need to consider extending the hours of opening.

**Procedures**

Services may find the following list of example procedures, useful tools in the implementation of this policy. List your services precise steps for achieving each action. Ask yourself when, how, where and who is responsible for what actions.

- Attendance record
- Authority to Administer or Self Administer Medication Form
- Enrolment Form
- Grievance procedures
- Late Collection Action Plan
- Late Collection Form
- Orientation checklists

**Links to other policies**

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Accidents, Emergencies and First Aid
- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Equal Opportunity
- Establishing a Protective Environment
- Excursions and Transport
- FDC Educators Monitoring Support and Supervision
- Grievances and Complaints Management
- Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
- Illness
- Medications and Medical Conditions
- Partnerships and Communication with Families
- Payment of Fees
- Records Management
- Supervision
Further sources

DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011 – 2012:

Section 4.6 – Recording attendance
Section 4.7 – Who is responsible for ensuring that attendance records are kept?
Section 4.8 – Absences from care
Section 5.5 – Key obligations imposed on approved child care services under family assistance law
Section 6.5 – What are my services responsibilities to parents?
Section 10 – Reporting attendance information
Section 13 – Absences from child care


Shaw, M – Developing and implementing your service’s child protection policy – extract from Putting Children First, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council – Issue 36, December 2010

Tansey, S – Supervision in children’s services – extract from Putting Children First, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council – Issue 15, September 2005

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