

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Early Years Services Delivery and Collection of Children	Policy No:	QA 2.21
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	Approved By:	Manager Aged and Family
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Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years	
Authorising Officer:	Manager Community Strengthening	

1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure:

- There is a consistent and safe process for the arrival and departure of all children attending Surf Coast Bush programs.
- That all children are collected by an authorised person as set out under 4.2 in this document.
- That the education and care service is aware of the different responsibilities that adults may have regarding a child.

2. Scope

This policy applies to children, parents/guardians, staff, management, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Surf Coast pre-schools.

3. Application

Not applicable

4. Definitions

Related Court Orders:

Previous Terminology	Current Terminology
Access	Contact
Custody	Residence and Specific Issues Order for day-to-day care and control
Guardianship	Specific Issues Order gives responsibility for long term care & welfare

5. Policy

All parents and authorised persons have access to the relevant Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Service and their children at all times; unless relevant Court Orders are held by the service that specify otherwise.

The Surf Coast Bush Kindergarten responsible person has the responsibility to ensure that:

- Court Orders are attached to the child's records and treated confidentially. Bush kinder staff will view this documentation.
- In the event that a parent / guardian breaks a Court Order and seeks access to the child, staff / educators will contact the parent / guardian with custody entitlements and the police immediately. If staff / educators are placed in a position where the health, safety and well-being of children, their own safety and that of others at the service is at risk, they should enact the service's Emergency Management Plan and contact the police. The service Team Leader and Early Years Coordinator are to be contacted.

Parents / Guardians have a responsibility to ensure that:

- A copy of all Court Orders in relation to residence and specific issues orders must be provided to the service upon enrolment or as obtained.
- Parents need to notify the service of any changes to these documents as soon as they occur. If the service does not have a copy of Court Orders it will assume that both parents / guardians have equal custody of the child therefore both have access.

a. Sign in/sign out

- Children must be signed in and out of the Bush Kinder program via the Attendance Sheet or electronically
- The child's name, time of arrival, expected time of departure must be written clearly and signed by the person delivering and collecting the child.
- The parent / guardian must notify the Bush Kinder staff and record on the Attendance Sheet, if someone other than the parent or guardian will be collecting the child.

b. Authorised persons

- The person who is responsible for collecting the child must be authorised on the enrolment form.
- People unfamiliar to the education and care service may be required to provide photo identification or other satisfactory identification before a child is released into their care.
- No child is to be released to persons other than those nominated by parents / guardians and recorded in the Child Enrolment Record (located at the education & care service).
- Parents / guardians must provide in writing the name of the person or persons who are authorised to collect their child from the education and care service. An authorised person must be 18 years or older.
- Any change to an authorised person, including a Family Court document, requires the Child Enrolment Record to be updated.
- Verbal authorisation, along with a description of the person, can be accepted for a new person to collect the child in an emergency, but this must be followed up with written permission from the parent / guardian within 7 days.

c. Unauthorised persons

- An unauthorised person includes:
 - a person who is prohibited by a Court Order from having contact with the child or,
 - a person who does not have written permission from the child's parent / guardian to collect them from the service or Bush Kinder program.
- If an unauthorised person arrives to collect a child, the child must not be released into that person's care until a parent / guardian is contacted to verify that the person is authorised to do so.
- Verbal authorisation, along with a description of the person, can be accepted for a new person to collect the child in an emergency, but this must be followed up with written permission from the parent / guardian within 7 days.
- A child may only be taken from the Bush Kinder site by staff / educators/ ambulance medic's without parental consent if the child requires urgent medical treatment or if there is an emergency at the service. In these situations the child's parent / guardian will be notified as soon as practicable.

d. Collection of Children by Unfit Person

- A child will not be given into the care of a person if the staff / educator has reasonable grounds to believe that doing so would place the child in danger, even if the person in question has lawful authority to collect the child.
- Situations where concern may occur include:
 - A parent / guardian or other person who is authorised to collect the child seems too ill, or affected by alcohol or drugs, to safely care for the child.
 - Where a person collecting a child from the service is believed to be under the age of 18 and they cannot provide proof of age.
- In the situation where an unfit person arrives to collect a child, staff/educators will:
 - Contact one of the other people who is authorised to collect the child, and arrange alternate means for the collection of the child.
 - If the staff / educators are placed in a position where the health safety and well-being of the child, their own safety and that of others at the service is at risk, they should enact the service's Emergency Management Plan and contact the police. The service Team Leader and Kindergarten Cluster Manager are to be contacted.

e. Non Collection of Children

- If the designated person fails to collect a child from the centre / premises within 15 minutes of closing time and no contact has been made with the service the following procedure will take place:
 - The service staff / educator will contact the parents / guardians on the telephone numbers given.
 - If no contact can be made, the emergency contacts will be called in turn and asked to collect the child.
 - If emergency contacts can't be reached staff / educator will stay with the child until contact with parents / guardians can be made.
 - If contact is not able to be made with parents / guardians after one hour, the staff member / educator will consult with the relevant Early Years Team Leader, Kindergarten Cluster Manager and the Department of Education and Training (DET) and police will be contacted.

f. Late Pick-up of Children

- Early Years Services will work in partnership with families to avoid the need to apply a late pick up of children fee wherever possible.
- Special circumstances i.e. traffic accident or vehicle breakdown, will be given consideration in relation to the administration of late pick up fees.
- Whenever possible the parent(s) / guardian(s) are to phone the service to advise they will be late to collect their child.

6. Records

Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Early Years Enrolment and Consent Form	Until the child is 25 years of age.	Until the child is 25 years of age.	Off-Site
Attendance Sheet	Destroy 7 years after last attendance of child.	Destroy 7 years after last attendance of child.	Off-Site

7. Attachments

Not Applicable

8. References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

D14/94973 Delivery & Collection of Children Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

D14/95703 Early Years Enrolment and Consent Form

Other References

Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit (2011)
Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2009
Childcare Service Handbook (Department of Education)

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