

Early Years Services – QA2.4 Delivery and Collection of Children

TRIM Reference: D14/94973 Due for Review: 9 April 2022
Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to ensure:

- a consistent and safe process for the arrival and departure of all children attending Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services.
- all children are collected by an authorised person as defined below in the authorised person section
- the education and care service is aware of the different responsibilities that adults may have regarding a child.

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 2.3.2, 7.3.5

Evidence of link to Education & Care Services National Regulations: 99, 158-159 & 168 (2) (g)
Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020.

Scope

All Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, Family Day Care (FDC) educators, children and families accessing the services.

Policy

Rationale

"The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that a child who is being educated and cared for by the education and care service does not leave the premises except in accordance with r 99 (4), (Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011).

Children Services Regulations Victoria 2009: r. 72.

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.

Procedure

The Early Years' Service responsible person has the responsibility to ensure that:

- A copy of all Court Orders in relation to residence and specific issue orders must be provided to the service upon enrolment or as obtained. These documents will be attached to the child's records and treated confidentially.
- 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.
- 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 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 (located at the education & care service) and contact the police.
- The service Team Leader and Early Years Coordinator are to be contacted.

Parents / Guardians have a responsibility to ensure that:

- The service is provided with a copy of all current Court Orders in relation to their child.
- The service responsible person is notified if there are any changes to these orders as soon as they occur
- 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.

Sign in/sign out

- Children must be signed in and out either paper based or electronically at the service via the Attendance Sheet.
- For paper based 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 staff / Family Day Care educator and record on the Attendance Sheet either paper based or electronically, if someone other than the parent or guardian will be collecting the child.

Picking up Children

- Children must be signed in and out at the end of each session.
- The person who is responsible for collecting the child must be authorised on the enrolment form.
- No child will be released into the care of a person who is not identified on the enrolment form without prior notice from the parent / guardian. Where verbal notice is given this is to be followed up with written permission from the parent / guardian within 7 days.
- Parent/guardian introducing the adult who may collect their child is ideal; where this is not possible identification is required.

Authorised persons

- 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.
- 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.

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.
- 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. Proof of identification must be sighted at collect (driver's license)
- A child may only be taken from the service by staff / educators 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 possible.

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.
 - If unknown to the staff/educator, authorised persons (as listed on the enrolment form, or advised by the parent / guardian verbally) will be requested to show identification when collecting the child.

In this situation 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 (located at the education & care service – (inclusive of the Lockdown Plan) and contact the police.
- The service Team Leader and Early Years Coordinator are to be contacted.

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, Coordinator Early Years and the Department of Education and Training (DET), and police will be contacted.

Late Pick- up of Children Fees

- 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.
- Where it is determined that a late pick up fee applies; this will be charged to parents / guardians for each child not collected from the service by closing time.
- The fee charged for late collections is determined by:
 - The service’s need to recoup expenses incurred in employee overtime wages.
 - The need to deter families from making a habit of late collections.

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

Related Procedure

Nil.

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 2020
Childcare Service Handbook (Department of Education)

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	Approved	General Manager Culture and Community – 1 April 2014
2	Amended	Manager Aged and Family – 1 May 2015
3	Amended	Manager Aged and Family – 26 September 2017
4	Amended	Manager Community Strengthening – 21 June 2019
5	Amended	Manager Community Strengthening – 9 October 2020