Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Lake Mac Newy OOSH will ensure that children arrive at and leave the Service in a manner that safeguards their health, safety and wellbeing. Educators will manage this by following clear procedures for the delivery and collection of children, ensuring families understand their requirements and responsibilities, and accounting for children's whereabouts at all times while in the Service's care.

In accordance with the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW), Lake Mac Newy OOSH recognises that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are paramount in all decisions and actions. The Service is committed to maintaining a child safe environment that promotes children's rights, participation and protection from harm, in line with the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

DELIVERY OF CHILDREN

- Children are not to be left at the Service unattended at any time before the Service's opening hours.
- In accordance with Regulation 158, any person delivering a child to the Service must sign the child in on the Service's attendance system. Where this is not reasonably possible, the child may be signed in by the Nominated Supervisor or an educator. Educators will be aware of each child's arrival and will exchange information with the person delivering the child, including who will collect the child.
- Educators will actively supervise all entry points during arrival times, so that children transition safely into the Service and are accounted for immediately on arrival.
- Children will not be permitted to enter the Service without an educator being aware of their arrival and assuming responsibility for their supervision.
- Where a child requires medication to be administered while at the Service, the person delivering the child must document this in writing, in accordance with the *Dealing with Medical Conditions and Medication Administration* policy.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

- Children must be collected by the closing time of the Service.
- Under Regulation 99, any person collecting a child must be listed as an authorised nominee on the child's enrolment form, with their contact details. The collection list must be kept current and updated regularly.
- The person collecting a child must sign the child out on the Service's attendance system. Where this is not reasonably possible, the child may be signed out by the Nominated Supervisor or an educator. Educators will be aware of each child's departure and will exchange information with the person collecting the child.
- Educators will be aware of each child's departure from the Service, so that children are only collected by a person on their authorised collection list.
- Educators will verify collection authorisations against enrolment records and any court orders, parenting orders, parenting plans or other legal documentation held by the Service.

- Where there is uncertainty about a person's authority or identity to collect a child, the child will remain in the care of the Service until that person's identity and authority have been confirmed and the child's safety can be assured.
- Decisions about the collection of children will be guided by the paramountcy principle, so that the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests remain the paramount consideration.
- Educators should be notified as soon as possible if an authorised nominee will be later than expected. The child will be told, to avoid unnecessary anxiety.
- Persons collecting children must be at least 16 years of age. Government-issued photo identification, such as a NSW Photo Card, must be sighted and verified by educators where the person is not known to the Service.
- Where a person not on the collection list arrives to collect a child, written authorisation from an authorised nominee will be sought before the child leaves the Service. This includes verification against enrolment records and any court orders or parenting orders held by the Service. The Coordinator will also request identification. Photo identification must be sighted and verified even where verbal authorisation has been given and must match the enrolment record or the authorisation details supplied.
- In an emergency, where a child's authorised nominees cannot collect the child and a person not on the collection list will be collecting them, the Service must be notified by phone as soon as possible by an authorised nominee. Written authorisation will be obtained where possible; in an emergency, verbal consent together with an identification check will be sufficient.
- Where age and developmentally appropriate, educators will listen to and consider children's views, concerns or disclosures about collection arrangements, while ensuring any decision prioritises the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.
- Authorised nominees are asked to leave the premises within 10 minutes of a child being signed out. The Service does not hold Working with Children Checks for authorised nominees and is not able to supervise adults on site who are not engaged in the program. This is a child safety measure and applies to all persons collecting children.

Where a person appears unfit to collect a child

If the person collecting a child appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, and educators consider that the person is unfit to take responsibility for the child, educators will:

- Discuss their concerns with the person, without the child present, where possible.
- Suggest that the person contact another parent or authorised nominee to collect the child.
- Take all reasonable steps necessary to protect the child, other children and staff from harm, ensuring the child's safety and wellbeing remain the paramount consideration. The procedures in the *Child Protection* and *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policies will be followed.
- Contact Police immediately where there are concerns for the child's immediate safety and make a report to the DCJ Child Protection Helpline or other relevant authority where required by legislation, policy or the circumstances.
- Document the decision and the action taken where an authorisation to collect a child is refused, as evidence for the authorities.

Where concerns arise that a child's safety may be compromised during collection, the Service will consider its obligations under child protection legislation, reportable conduct requirements and mandatory reporting obligations.

ABSENT AND UNACCOUNTED CHILDREN

- Families must notify the Service as early as possible if a child will be absent. This may be done by email, by text to the Service mobile phone, or by marking the child absent on the Service's attendance system.
- A non-communication fee of **$10 per family, per session** will be charged where the Service has not been notified by 2:00pm, or where the Service needs to phone to establish the whereabouts of a child due to non-attendance. Fees are set out in the *Fees, Terms and Conditions* policy.
- Educators will record absences in a place where other educators will see the information.
- Families will be informed of their notification responsibilities on enrolment.
- The Service will maintain and annually review a Safe Arrival of Children risk assessment, in accordance with Regulations 102AAB and 102AAC.
- Educators will follow the *Safe Arrival of Children* procedures whenever a child expected to attend does not arrive as anticipated.
- Where a child attends after school care only, families must notify educators when the child returns from an absence, so educators know to expect the child.

Where a child cannot be accounted for

Where a child cannot be immediately located, the Service will prioritise the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests, ensure appropriate supervision of all remaining children, immediately notify the Responsible Person or Nominated Supervisor, and act without delay.

Where a child does not arrive at the Service, or is not waiting in the designated area when expected, educators will:

- Notify the Responsible Person immediately.
- Conduct a roll check as soon as practicable where attendance numbers do not correspond with the number of children expected at the Service or there is any uncertainty about a child's whereabouts.
- Ask the other children what they know of the child's whereabouts.
- Approach or phone the school office and ask about the child's attendance and last known whereabouts. Contact with the school will be maintained throughout.
- Contact Police **immediately** where there is any reasonable concern for the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing, where there is information to suggest the child has left the school grounds, or where the child's whereabouts cannot be confirmed following initial enquiries. These circumstances will take priority over the remaining steps, and Police contact will not be delayed while further enquiries or searches are undertaken.
- Arrange appropriate supervision for the children remaining at the Service while an educator, where safe and practicable, checks the designated collection area and the surrounding school grounds.
- Contact the child's authorised nominees. Where the child was absent from school, remind them of their notification responsibilities and establish when the child is expected to return to the Service. Where the child's whereabouts cannot be confirmed, continue contacting the authorised nominees until contact is made, and maintain communication until the child is located.
- Conduct a further roll check by approximately 3:30 pm to confirm that all children expected to attend After School Care have arrived or are otherwise accounted for.

- Where immediate Police notification is not required in the circumstances, contact Police **within 20 minutes** of the time the child was expected to arrive, if the child remains unaccounted for. Where circumstances allow, the Police will be contacted sooner.
- Notify the Regulatory Authority through the NQA IT System within 24 hours where the matter meets the definition of a serious incident.

Following any missing child, unauthorised collection attempt, collection refusal, safe arrival concern or significant supervision incident, the Service will review supervision arrangements, risk assessments, policies, procedures and practices, to identify improvements and reduce future risk.

ACKNOWLEDGING CHILDREN'S ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

- Educators will ensure every child is signed out from before school care on the Service's attendance system, leaves the OOSH premises, and enters the school grounds in time to attend school.
- Where a child arrives at before school care after the school starting time, the person delivering the child will take them to the school office.
- Where a child injures themselves at the Service or falls ill and cannot attend school, an authorised nominee will be contacted to collect the child within 30 minutes of the phone call. Where possible, the child will remain with two educators at the Service.
- Educators will acknowledge children's arrival at after school care by signing each child in on the Service's attendance system as they arrive at care.
- Where a child injures themselves or falls ill at school and an authorised nominee has been contacted to collect them, the Service will not accept the child into care for that session.
- Educators will ensure that all children are signed out from after school care on the Service's attendance system, and that the OOSH premises are empty, before closing the Service.
- Educators will maintain active supervision at all designated entry and exit points during arrival and collection times, so that children are monitored closely, unauthorised access is prevented, and transitions are managed safely.
- Educators will remain alert to any indicator that a child may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, and will respond in accordance with child protection and reportable conduct obligations.
- Any concern about a child's safety, wellbeing or protection identified during arrival, departure or collection will be acted on immediately, in accordance with the *Child Protection* policy.

CONSIDERATIONS

Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations	National Quality Standard & Child Safe Standards	Links to other Service Policies	Other Documentation / Evidence
Sections 162A, 165, 167, 170 Regulations 84, 86, 87, 99, 102AAB, 102AAC, 157, 158, 160, 161, 168, 170, 171, 172, 176	Standard 2.2 Elements 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 Child Safe Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10	– Enrolment and Orientation – Dealing with Medical Conditions and Medication Administration – Providing a Child Safe Environment – Acceptance & Refusal of Authorisations – Child Protection – Safe Arrival of Children – Supervision of Children – Management of Incidents, Injury, Illness & Trauma – Fees – Fees, Terms and Conditions	– Family Handbook – Staff Handbook – My Time, Our Place framework – Service newsletters and family notices – Authorisation details on enrolment forms – Attendance records – Medication authorisation records – Safe arrival risk assessments – Court orders, parenting orders and parenting plans, where applicable – Incident, injury, illness and trauma records – Missing child records and reviews – Sign in and sign out records

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE

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