

Safe Arrival and Departure of Children Policy

Policy Statement

Northern Rivers Community Gateway is committed to the safe delivery of children to, and collection from, our service and to the safe arrival of children during travel between the school setting and our service. We have detailed processes, procedures and practices in this regard and ensure that all educators and staff implement them.

Procedure

The safety, wellbeing, rights, and best interests of children are our paramount consideration. This commitment underpins all decisions, actions, and practices, and takes precedence in every aspect of our service.

Safe Arrival when signed in by parent/authorised person

- Children will not be accepted prior to the opening hours of the service.
- The person bringing the child is responsible for signing-in the child via OWNA indicating the child's arrival time.
- The person bringing the child must ensure an educator is aware of the child's presence before leaving the service.
- Any points of information are to be recorded in OWNA, such as particular requirements for the day.
- If a child requires medication of any kind, the parent/guardian must complete and sign a Medication Administration form, as per the Child Medical Condition Policy.

Safe Arrival when travelling between an education and care service and any other education service

- Risk assessments will be conducted at least annually or as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safe arrival of children travelling between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service.
- Parents/guardians will confirm in writing at time of enrolment whether their child will be travelling from another education and care service to our service or from our service to

another education service. This could include travelling by school bus or walking from another school. Educators will confirm the procedure of safe arrival with the families and children during orientation.

- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing accurate and current details including transport details such as the school bus name and number and scheduled time of arrival. Parents/guardians must update the service in writing as soon as any details change.
- The Coordinator will have regular consultations with the relevant schools to confirm and/or inform updates to policy and procedures. The service will also consult with parents of the children being cared for and include the children in these discussions. The coordinator will clearly outline the roles and responsibilities for service staff, school-based staff, children and families.
- Educators will have viewed and confirmed the attendance list for the day, before meeting the child/ren at the designated collection point. Children will be head counted in OWNA. OOSH Educators take responsibility for the care of children at this stage.
- Educators will take the children back to the service and as per procedures sign the children in on OWNA.
- Educators will always maintain adequate supervision and child ratios as required.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for the timely reporting of absences and keeping contact details up to date.
- If a booked in child does not present at the designated collection point, the educator will, if applicable confirm with other school staff present if the child had attended school that day, and call the parents/guardians and if necessary, the emergency contacts. In the event there is no response from contact numbers or parents, Assistant Coordinators must contact the coordinator. The coordinator will contact the CEO. The CEO will direct the coordinator regarding seeking advice from the Department of Community and Justice and/or police.

Safe Arrival when travelling on service transport .

- Refer to the Safe transportation of children policy for the procedure.
- Educators will confirm the procedure of safe arrival and safe transportation with the families and children during service orientation.

Safe Arrival when already onsite at the school

- The Coordinator will have regular consultations with the school for safe arrival to the service procedures. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly outlined.
- Educators will usually meet the children at the kindy collection points at the beginning of the school year.
- Educators will confirm the procedure of safe arrival with the families and children during orientation.



Departure

- Children must be collected by the service closing time.
- The authorised person collecting the child must:
 - Sign the child out via OWNA, indicating time of departure.
 - Collect all the child's belongings.
 - Ensure an educator is aware they are taking the child from the service.
 - Notify the service if they are collecting the child later than usual (and the child will be notified to avoid anxiety).
- Only the parent/guardian or a nominated Hub Guest can sign out a child with a QR code or username and password via OWNA.
- A family is required to arrange for a person who regularly collects a child to be an authorised nominee on the child's profile and listed as a Hub Guest on OWNA.
- Any authorised person is required to provide proof of identification (such as driver's licence or Medicare card) if the educator has not seen them previously.
- Names and contact numbers of all people authorised to collect the child must be included in the Enrolment Form. Any changes must be advised in writing to the service as soon as possible.
- Provided the parent/guardian has provided written advice and consent, an authorised nominee/person collecting the child may be under the age of 18 years old.
- If anyone not named on the Enrolment Form is to collect a child, parents must personally inform the service prior to pick up. This change must be confirmed by email to oosh@nrcg.org.au. The person picking up the child is asked to bring identification, which is to be checked by an educator, who includes a note in OWNA against the sign-out.
- If the service has not been notified and someone other than the parent or authorised person comes to collect the child, the service will ring the parent/guardian for authorisation and obtain written approval via email.
- Staff will, where it is possible without unreasonably endangering any person, not allow children to leave the service without written permission, or to be released to a person other than the parent or guardian of the child, or to an authorised person as permitted under the above procedure. If in doubt, the Assistant Coordinator will contact a parent/guardian immediately to discuss.
- The service will not release the child to anyone who is not authorised without prior consent and in line with the service policy.
- No child will be permitted to travel home or to another activity on their own unless written direction or approval or, in an emergency, verbal direction or approval is received from a known parent or guardian of the child. These records (including documentation of verbal approval) will be kept.

- Children who have appropriate permission to leave the service alone will be signed out by the Assistant Coordinator at the agreed time and make a note in OWNA against the sign-out.

Late arrivals and departures

- Parents/guardians and if necessary, emergency contacts will be phoned on the most recent numbers provided if:
 - a child booked for after school care has not arrived within 10 minutes of expected arrival or does not arrive on a school bus per the OWNA booking schedule.
 - children have not been collected or parents have not arranged for collection within five minutes of normal closing time.
- To ensure the child's safety, in the event there is no response from parents and emergency contacts within 15 minutes of normal closing time, the Assistant Coordinator will escalate to local NSW Police and inform the Coordinator of the situation. Additional reports may be required to be made as soon as practicable as per reporting requirements including incident notification to the Regulatory Authority and mandatory reporting to the Department of Communities and Justice.
- The Assistant Coordinator and/or Coordinator will inform the Senior Manager Business Support and Children's Services and the CEO of the situation.
- Refer to the fee policy for the late collection fee.

Custody and access

- If a parent/guardian is experiencing issues associated with custody and access they are encouraged to discuss this with a Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator.
- A copy of a current Custody Order is required for the service's file to ensure legal compliance. The Coordinator will create a Risk Minimisation Plan and advise the Assistant Coordinator who is responsible for advising other educators. A photo of the defendant will need to be provided by the family/carer if any court orders are in place (restraining order, intervention order, apprehended violence order, domestic violence order).
- As part of sign-in Educators are responsible to check Risk Minimisation Plans.
- If there is any likelihood of problems with the collection of a child, or any changes to Court Orders, the parent/guardian should notify the Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator immediately.
- Staff will, where it is possible without unreasonably endangering any person, not allow children to leave the service without written permission, or to be released to a person other than the parent or guardian of the child, or to an authorised person as permitted under the above procedure. If in doubt, the supervisor/educator will contact a parent/guardian immediately to discuss.



Children leaving without permission

- If a child leaves the service for any reason without permission staff will assess the situation and call police and a parent/guardian immediately.
- Staff will not leave the service to pursue a child if it will or may:
 - leave other children in the service with inadequate supervision
 - expose the staff member to unacceptable risk of personal harm

Visitors

- Visitors may be invited to the service to stimulate the children's program and could include local people or family members with a skill or ability to share with the children and educators, or community resources such as police, fire brigade.
- All other visitors must make an appointment with the Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator at a convenient time.
- Visitors must sign-in via OWNA.
- Professional access to the service is at the coordinator/supervisor discretion or as required by law. Professionals include union representatives, State and Federal Government departmental officers, workplace health and safety inspectors, building inspectors and police officers.
- Refer Emergency Management Plan Policy for details regarding unwanted visitors.

Incidents

- Staff must report all incidents and near misses according to the Reporting Requirements About Children Procedure. Under the National Law and Regulations this includes any serious incident, which includes:
 - A child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service
 - A child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
 - A child is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

- This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review the procedures every two years.
- Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.
- In accordance with R.172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact

on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related policies and procedures

- Children's Services Fee Policy, Safe Transportation of Children Policy, Child Medical Condition Policy, Emergency Management Plan Policy, Acceptance and refusal of authorisations policy, Reporting and Notification Procedure, Infectious Diseases Policy, COVID-19 Safety Plan, Managing Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Childcare Service Procedure.

Related legislation and additional resources

- Custodial requirements;
- National Law Sections 2A, 165, 167, 175; National Regulations 99, 102AAB, 102AAC, 122, 123, 158, 161, 170, 171, 172
- Child Safe Standards