Access to Children Policy including Delivery and Collection

Policy Statement

Our services have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of each individual at all times and will work collaboratively with families to ensure that access to their child/children during care hours is welcomed and supported.

The access to and delivery and collection of children from our services must be managed appropriately to ensure that only those authorised by parents/guardians are able to have access to and deliver and collect their children from the service.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Part 4.2: Children’s Health and Safety
Division 6: Collection of children from premises and excursions
- Regulation 99: Children leaving the education and care service premises

Part 4.6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Regulation 157: Access for parents

Part 4.7: Leadership and Service Management
Division 1: Management of Services – Subdivision 1 Attendance and enrolment records
- Regulation 158: Children’s attendance record to be kept by approved provider
- Regulation 159: Children’s attendance record to be kept by family day care educator

Strategies and Practices

Access to Children
Subject to any court order or any notice to the contrary, the services will ensure that a person listed on the enrolment form as the parent or guardian of a child being cared for, may enter the premises for the purpose of accessing their child/children except in the following circumstances:-

- If permitting the entry would pose a risk to the safety of children or educators
- If the service/educator is aware that the parent/guardian is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child

Collection of children
- Only those nominated on the enrolment form by the parents/guardians are able to collect children from care. Please note that those authorised to collect children must be aged eighteen (18) years and over
- Families are able to update those nominated on the enrolment form to collect children as the need arises
- In the event that a person arrives to collect the child who is not nominated on the enrolment form; educators are to:
Mornington Peninsula Shire Education and Care Services
Family Day Care and School Holiday Program

- Contact the parent/guardian who has lawful authority to authorise collection of the child; to obtain verbal permission to release the child
- Check identity of the person to ensure they match the details of the person provided verbally by the parent Eg: Drivers Licence

Possible inappropriate collection of children
- If educators feel that the person collecting the child from care could be a risk to the child’s wellbeing Eg; alcohol or drug affected; the educator has a duty of care to the child to attempt to ensure their safety and seek possible alternatives for the collection of the child, which may include; a later collection time and/or offering to contact an alternate authorised collection person to collect child
- If the person does not accept other options and insists that they be given the child and they are authorised to collect the child; then the child should be handed over; however if the educator feels uncomfortable with the possible risk to the child then their duty of care may involve them contacting the police to advise of the situation Eg: advise them that a person under the influence has left the service with an unrestrained child in a vehicle
- Educators are to report any irregularity in the collection and dropping off of children to the service coordinator

Attendance Record - Signing in and out
- Each service must maintain an attendance record that details the following:
  - The full name of the child
  - The time the child arrives and departs
- The attendance record must be signed by:
  - The person who delivers and/or collects the child from the service or
  - An educator Eg: on collection/arrival from and/or delivery to school, preschool

Non collection of children
- In the event that children are not collected by the closing time of the service, educators are to follow these procedures:
  - Attempt to contact the parent/guardians; if they are un-contactable;
  - Contact the emergency contact’s provided on the enrolment form
  - Contact the service coordinator or team leader to advise of situation and obtain further support and advise
  - If no contact can be made with any parent/guardian/emergency contact and a reasonable amount of time has elapsed; educators are to contact the Police and the Department of Education and Training (DET) to inform them of the situation and to seek assistance
  - Service coordinator to contact team leader child care services to advise of situation and recommendation of the Police and/or DET
School holiday program, a minimum of two educators are to stay with the child until a suitable outcome has been reached.

**Sources and further reading**
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Quality Standards
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended 2011)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act
- Child Wise – Talking to your children about safety fact sheet (childwise.net)