

Access To and Release of Children Policy

Supersedes: Procedure for dealing with a dispute relating to separated parents visiting children at the Centre, and Release of Children Policy

Date: Tuesday, 8 July 2003, Revised 14/09/05, Revised 19/08/08, Revised 27/02/2012, Revised 20/04/12, Reviewed 23-06-2016

Approved By Management Committee **Date**

Background:

The Centre has a duty of care to the children that attend the Centre. A part of this Duty of Care is to ensure that access to a child attending the Centre is limited to persons authorised by the parent/guardian and this includes collection of the child from the Centre. This policy endeavours to provide procedures for centre educators to ensure only authorised persons have access to the children, and that no child leaves the Centre with any one not authorised to take them and/or who are deemed by educators to be adversely affected by alcohol, drugs, etc

Aim:

To ensure that:

1. no unauthorised person will have access to any child attending the Centre.
2. no child attending the Centre is released into the care of a person unauthorised to collect them
3. the person collecting them is fit to have the child released into their care.

Linked Policies

Enrolment Policy
Late Collection of Children Policy

Implementation:

On Enrolment

1. Parents will be required to provide information regarding those persons authorised to pick up their children and/or be contacted in an emergency.
2. Parents will be required to provide information regarding any court orders affecting access to their children.
3. Parents will be required to provide details of any persons whom they do not wish to have contact with their children, in addition to those affected by court orders.
4. Parents will be required to provide University Preschool & Child Care Centre with information relating to any changes in people authorised to have contact with or collect their children as necessary.
5. Information regarding children's contacts and persons authorised to collect them will be maintained and updated by University Preschool & Child Care Centre every 6 months.
6. This information will be kept on the child's personnel file located in a filing cabinet in the Directors office
7. The Director will ensure that this information is passed onto the team leaders/educators responsible for the care of the children
8. University Preschool & Child Care Centre will provide information to the parents or guardians responsible for the child, via the information booklet and the parent policy booklet, as to the Centre policy regarding our 'Access to and Release of Children Policy' and the procedures to be followed for Access to and collection of children.

Procedure for Requests or Attempts from Unauthorised Persons/Parents to Visit Children Attending the Centre

1. **WHERE** there is a Parenting Plan or Court Order in place that restricts the person or parent having access to the child
 - a. Redirect the person or parent to the Director or in the Director's absence to the Acting Director. If both are absent, educators should take the following steps
 - b. The Director/Acting Director/Educator Member should locate a copy of the Parenting Plan or Court Order. Copies of which are kept with the child's Developmental records and in the child's personal file located in the Director's office
 - c. If the Parenting Plan or Court Order restricts the person or parent from having access to the child the Director/Acting Director/educator should show it to the person/parent and ask them to leave the Centre.
 - d. If the person/parent refuses to leave and demands to see the child the Director/Acting Director/educator should try to attract the attention of another educator and direct them to call ANU Security on Ext. 52249 to advise them of the situation, ask that they call the police and that they come and escort the person/parent from the Centre.
 - e. Where the person threatens to forcibly remove the child from the Centre and/or becomes violent and there is concern for the safety of other educators or children then educator should
 - i. Allow them to go
 - ii. Call ANU Security on ext 52249 and/or the police immediately on 0-000 to inform them of what has happened
 - iii. Advise Office of Children, Youth and Family Services - Children's Services Branch of what has happened phone; 0 - 62071114
 - iv. Make a written report of the incident noting time, date, names of people involved and a factual account of what happened.
 - f. You cannot prevent either parent from having contact without a legal document authorising this, unless the parent's behaviour is unacceptably angry or violent and poses a risk to the safety of the child and/or educators.
 - g. If a parent removes a child without legal authorisation, the Police and Children's Services Department must be advised

Procedure for the collection of children

1. **WHERE** the parent has made other arrangements for the collection of their child from the Centre the Centre should be notified in the following manner.
 - a) In the morning when the child is left at the Centre the parent or other responsible adult should advise an educator of the name and phone number of the person who will be picking up the child, this information should also be recorded in the sign on book.
 - b) Where arrangements for the collection of the child change through the day the parent should phone the Centre and advise an educator of the name, relationship to the child and phone number of the person collecting the child. This information will then be recorded in the daily diary and appropriate educators advised.
 - c) If the person collecting the child is not already known to Centre educators, photo identification may be requested when the person arrives at the Centre.

NB This procedure should be followed even when the person collecting the child is already on our list of people authorised to collect the child. This procedure also applies to staff who are authorised by the parent to take the child to or from the Centre.
2. **WHERE** someone, other than an authorised person, arrives at the Centre to take home a child and the Centre has not been notified, regardless of who that person is, the following procedure will be followed by the Centre before the child will be able to leave with that person:
 - a) **Staff** will explain to the person the reasons why the Centre will not allow the child to leave with them. i.e. University Preschool & Childcare Centre's policy for the care and protection of all children.
 - b) **Staff** will make every effort to contact the parents and confirm the arrangements.
 - c) Where parents are unable to be contacted, emergency contacts will be rung, with the aim of:
 - i. ascertaining where the parents may be contacted;

- ii. confirming that the person is a fit and proper person to take that particular child from the Centre, this may include asking to see photo identification for the person; or,
 - iii. arranging for the emergency contacts to come and pick up the child if it is past 5.45pm and the above steps have been unsuccessful
- d) If none of the above are successful, two members of staff will remain with the child at the Centre until satisfactory arrangements have been made and the conditions of this policy have been met. A late fee will be charged as detailed under "the Procedure for Late Collection of Children" later in this policy.
- 3. WHERE** an educator or members have serious doubts as to whether a person collecting a child is fit to have a child released into their care, possibly because they are adversely affected by alcohol, drugs, etc., the following procedure should be followed:
- a) **Staff** will raise the issue with the person concerned
 - b) **Staff** will give that person reasons for the staff's concern
 - c) **Staff** will suggest that the person does not (where applicable) drive and offer them the choice of calling a friend to collect both the child and the person or calling a taxi
 - d) Where the person threatens to become violent and there is concern for the safety to staff or children then staff should
 - i. Let them go
 - ii. Obtain licence number of the vehicle and direction of travel (where applicable)
 - iii. Phone the police immediately on 0-000 and give details.
 - iv. Decide if it is necessary to make a notification to Office of Children, Youth & Family Services. Refer Child Protection Policy

NB: No educator should put themselves or any of the children at risk of harm or injury.

Emergency Numbers:
ANU Security ext 52249
Police 0 – 000

Reference:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) (2011). Guide to the National Quality Standard. Sydney, NSW: ACECQA

ACT Government, *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011*, and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (available from <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>)

Tansey, S. (2006) *Quality Improvement & Accreditation System Factsheet #2: Safety in children's services* - http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/factsheets/qias_factsheet_%202.pdf, accessed on 29-02-2016

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009a). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra, ACT: DEEWR

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