



# SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL Policy

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**Effective Date:** January 1, 2024

**Revised Date:**

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## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children registered at the Centre are accounted for on a daily basis. The policy will set out steps to take if a child does not arrive as expected or if a child is not picked up as expected, as well as the process of how to release a child and the individuals to whom the child may be released.

This policy will also provide staff, placement students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities at any given moment for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the Centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

Knowing where all of the children are is particularly helpful in the event that the childcare Centre must be evacuated when knowing where all the children are is a top priority.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

## Child Absent Report Form

All parents are encouraged to bring their children to the Centre by 9:00 am; however, the Centre permits arrivals until 10 am only. When circumstances arise where a child will not be attending, the parents are requested to complete the Child Absent Report Form so the Centre is aware they are not coming and have been accounted for.

*By 10 am:* If a child is not attending the Centre, whether due to illness, absence, appointment, vacation, or other reasons, parents are asked to complete the Child Absent Report Form they received via email upon enrollment. The Google Doc records each child's submission with a date and time stamp.

As children are reported on Google Docs, the program teachers can mark the child's absence accordingly. Parents can also comment on a specific period that the child will be away in the comment section. The child will be marked accordingly.

## Google Doc Form

The Google Doc form is accessible on all program computers through the classroom's email address as well as the Management Team's computers and the Administrator's cell phone.

For the School-Age program, as children are signed in as being reported absent, it is marked directly in the attendance folder for the afternoon staff. Upon opening the program, the school-age staff will verify on the Google Doc as well should any other children sign in late.

The master Google Doc master holds all responses until deleted. This form has been in use since 2020 and continues to have all responses recorded.

## Attempt to Contact

*Where a child has not arrived in care as expected:*

**At 10 am:** Each program will check their attendance and the Google Doc to verify that all children have been accounted for, whether physically in attendance or having been marked as absent, sick or on vacation.

If a child has not been marked as absent, the staff must immediately try to contact the primary caregivers, generally mom and dad, to inquire about the child's whereabouts. Attempts should be made by calling home, cell phones and businesses. If the person is unavailable, a message will be left with the reason for the call, instructing them to return the call to the Centre or to complete the Child Absent Report Form immediately. The outcome of the call will be communicated to the Supervisor.

**Second attempt:** If the staff is unable to make contact with the primary caregivers regarding the unreported child, the Management Team will make a *second* attempt to contact the primary caregivers via phone call or email so that reasonable effort has been made. Included in the email will be a link for the Child Absent Reporting form.

Once the child's absence has been confirmed, each program shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and *any additional information about the child's absence* in the daily written record, including who was called, who was contacted and spoken with and the result of the conversation.

**Additional attempts:** If by 11 am, no phone call, email or Google Doc can confirm the child's absence and the parents are still unable to be reached, the emergency contacts and authorized pick-up persons will be contacted. If, after these attempts, no confirmation of the child's absence can be confirmed, the **Police may be contacted**.

If a child had been sent home sick or had been reported in the Google Doc as absent due to illness, it is assumed that they will continue to recover at home; however, the form is to be completed daily with the reported child's absence until they return.

*If the primary contact phone numbers are no longer working, the staff is within their right to proceed with calling the emergency contact in an attempt to reach the parents. Once a primary caregiver is reached, they will be reminded of the importance of keeping up-to-date information on file.*

## Arrival at the Centre

As children arrive at the Centre or are reported absent, they are marked accordingly in the attendance folder in each program.

All children *must* be escorted into their classroom by the person dropping them off. The person is to ensure that they see the child's teacher so that the staff knows that the child is here. The staff will greet them, generally at the door, and enquire about the child's evening or how their morning has been.

*Parents are not permitted to do a 'drop and go' with their children at the front door. The Centre also does not permit children to arrive unaccompanied or deliver themselves to the Centre.*

Parents are informed that until the child is handed off to one of their teachers, they are responsible.

Parents are also responsible for communicating who will be picking up their child, should it be someone other than themselves. When this happens, the staff will verify that the person is listed on the emergency form or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent to provide the information in writing. A handwritten note or email to the Management Team is sufficient.

When there is a change in the pick-up person, as indicated by the parent, it must be documented in the daily written record.

## Arriving by Bus

It is understood that not all children will attend the Centre for beforecare; however, all children registered for aftercare are expected to arrive off the bus in the afternoon. Staff must ensure that all children arriving in the afternoon are accounted for.

Staff will always be waiting for the bus at the front door. The bus should not be waiting for staff.

*When a child does not arrive from school, has not been signed in or reported absent . . .*

1. If the child was **absent** from school:
  - i) Contact the parents to confirm the child's whereabouts.
  - ii) If the parents cannot be reached, call the school.
  - iii) If the school can confirm the child was a reported absence, the child can be marked absent. *The school, by law, must locate any child who does not arrive for school and is not reported absent.*
  - iv) The Management will reach out to the family via email and remind them to complete the Child Absent Report form if their child is not attending the program.
  
2. If the child was **present** at school:
  - i) Contact the parents to confirm if they have picked up the child.
  - ii) If the parents cannot be reached, call the school.

- iii) If the school confirms the child was present, contact the Management Team.
- iv) The Management Team will try the parents again via phone and email.
- v) If parents are reached and confirm they have the child, remind them to complete the Child Absent Form before 3 pm.
- vi) If the parents are reached and do not have the child, the Management Team will contact the bus company to have them halt the buses to look for the child.
- vii) If the bus company cannot locate the child, 9-1-1 will be called.
- viii) The Management Team will follow the directions of the Police.

In most cases, the child is easily located. At times, they may have gotten on the wrong bus, walked home with a friend, or the parent picked them up before they got on the bus and forgot to inform the Centre.

## Releasing a Child

Upon enrollment, parents can authorize up to four people, other than themselves, to whom the Centre can release their child. Two are emergency contacts, and two are authorized pick-ups. The emergency contacts are also to be made aware that if the Centre is unable to get in touch with the parents/guardians, they are to be available as needed.

*Parents must list at least one emergency contact person.*

Parents are asked to inform the staff if *anyone* other than themselves, the primary caregivers, is picking them up at the end of the day. If one of the people listed is picking up without the staff's knowledge, the staff or Management Team will place a phone call to the primary caregiver to confirm they are to release the child.

Parents may also call or email the Centre to give the name of a person not listed and request that their child be released to them. They will be reminded that the person needs to bring a photo ID to verify who they are and ask if the child knows them. If this person is going to continue to pick up, the parent will be offered to add them to their child's enrollment form. This change is to be documented in the program's daily written record.

If a pick-up person is familiar with the Centre yet unfamiliar to a staff member, the staff may confirm with another staff that the child is safe to be released. Confirming with another staff member generally happens with new or supply staff or when a child moves from one program to the next.

At pick-up time:

- Parents are permitted to share their PIN code with the person picking up their child to gain entry to the Centre OR
- If parents prefer, the authorized pick-up person can ring the doorbell until they become familiar with the Centre.
- When an authorized pick-up person arrives at the program or playground, including an unfamiliar parent, they will be asked for photo identification.
- The photo ID will be verified against the child's emergency form.

- Once the ID is verified, the child will be permitted to leave with the person.

Parents are permitted to update, change, or remove authorized pick-up persons at any time. One parent may not, however, remove the other parent unless there is a court order on file. The Centre is obligated under the law to follow all court orders. Parents cannot grant permission or change access days if it goes against the court order.

All parents and authorized pick-up persons must let the staff know that they have their child and are leaving the Centre. Arrival and departure times must be recorded as a Ministry of Education requirement.

Faith Infant and Early Education Centre **does not permit** children to be released from the program at any time, even with written authorization from the parent.

### Unauthorized Person

If an unauthorized person arrives at the Centre to pick up a child, they will not be permitted inside. They will be asked who they are to be picking up and to provide a photo ID. They will be left to wait outside while the staff or Management Team member places a phone call to the parent.

If the parent can confirm that the child can be released, the staff member will collect the person from the door and take them to pick up the child. If they cannot reach the parent, the child will not be released unless proof, such as a voicemail or string of text messages, can be viewed asking the person to pick up. Generally, the parent had forgotten to inform the Centre.

*If the unauthorized person attempting to pick up is an estranged parent or partner, a phone call to 911 is deemed necessary.*

### Late Pick Before Closing

If a parent/guardian has communicated that their child will be picked up at a specific time, and the child is not picked up, the staff member will attempt to contact the parent and advise that the child has not been picked up. Situations such as this generally happen when there is a child in a shared custody arrangement, or a child's appointment has been cancelled, and the parent has forgotten to let the Centre know.

Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, the staff will leave a message and inform the Supervisor. If the person picking up the child has contact information on file, a phone call will be made to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions. If they cannot be reached, a message will be left instructing them to call the Centre.

If the child remains at the Centre at the time of closing, the procedures below are to be followed.

### Late Pick Up At Closing

Five minutes prior to closing, all remaining children gather in the cubby area with the closing staff. Once closing time has been reached, one staff member will begin to place phone calls to the parents of the remaining children if they are unaware of the parents' late arrival.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor/Designate and the child's teacher to remain with the late child. Once a parent is reached, they are questioned as to when they will arrive or if there is someone closer that can arrive for pick up if it is a long timeframe.

If the primary caregivers are unavailable, the emergency contacts will be called until someone who can come to pick up the child is reached. At a minimum, two staff are required to remain until all children have been picked up.

If the children are going to be extremely late, they can be offered something small to eat from the pantry or fruit from the fridge. Children should be engaged in a group activity while they wait.

Provided that a parent is en route, staff are to follow the *Late Arrival Policy*.

If no one listed on the Child's Emergency Form can be reached within *30 minutes*, a phone call to the Administrator is deemed necessary. The Administrator will return to the Centre and attempt to engage in communication via email or text message.

If, after an hour, no one has been reached, a phone call to the Children's Aid Society is warranted. Direction from them will be followed going forward.

#### Ontario Regulation 137/15

##### Safe arrival and dismissal policy

50. Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has a policy respecting the safe arrival and dismissal of children that,

- a) Provides that a child may only be released from the child care centre or home child care premises,
  - i) to individuals indicated by a child's parent or
  - ii) in accordance with written permission from a child's parent to release the child from the program at a specified time without supervision; and
- b) sets out the steps that must be taken if,
  - i) a child does not arrive as expected at the centre or home child care premises or
  - ii) a child is not picked up as expected from the centre or home childcare premises.