



SERIOUS OCCURRENCE Policy & Procedure

Effective Date:	September 2002
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Attachments:	<i>Quick Reference Guide for Serious Occurrences</i> <i>Serious Occurrences Summary Form</i>

Introduction

This policy is intended to protect the interests, health, safety and welfare of the clients and strengthen accountability by establishing rules on reporting serious occurrences and meeting the requirements mandated by the Ministry of Education (MEDU) and Child Care and Early Years Act 2014 Reg. 38.

Faith Infant and Early Education Centre is accountable to the Ministries to demonstrate that the services provided are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and Ministry policy.

Serious occurrence reporting is one of many tools providing the Ministries and the Centre with an effective means of monitoring the appropriateness and quality of the service provided. Monitoring includes an ongoing review of the Centre's practices, procedures and training needs. Information regarding serious occurrences is available to Regional Program Supervisors, program advisors, licensing and compliance staff and corporate offices.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to provide clear instructions for staff, placement students and volunteers to follow for how to identify, respond to and report a serious occurrence. It ensures that there is a plan to deal with any serious incidents that may affect the health, safety and well-being of children and those working directly with

children and that these serious incidents are addressed by the childcare centre and reported to the Ministry of Education for review.

This policy is intended to fulfil the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures with respect to serious occurrences in childcare centres.

Its intended use by the Centre as an orientation for new staff, placement students and volunteers. It is to be used as a refresher for experienced staff and, finally, as a 'quick reference' for everyone involved in a serious occurrence or the reporting procedure.

A further intention of this policy is to provide greater transparency for parents and potential clients regarding serious occurrences that happen within the Centre.

General Principles

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014,

1. Every licensee shall ensure that,
 - a. *There are written policies and procedures for serious occurrences in each child care centre operated by the licensee and each premise where it oversees the provision of home child care that address, at a minimum, how to identify, respond to and report a serious occurrence;*
 - b. *A report is provided to a Program Advisor of any serious occurrence in any child care centre operated by the licensee or any premises where it oversees the provision of home child care within 24 hours of the licensee or supervisor becoming aware of the occurrence;*
 - c. *A summary of the report provided under clause (b) and of any action taken as a result is posted for at least 10 business days in a conspicuous place at the child care centre or home child care premises and*
 - d. *The report and the summary of the report are each kept per section 82.*
2. Every licensee of a child care centre or home child care agency shall,
 - a. *Conduct an annual analysis of all serious occurrences that occurred in the previous year at each child care centre operated by the licensee and at each premise where the licensee oversees the provision of home child care and*
 - b. *Keep records of the actions taken in response to the analysis. O. Reg. 126/16, s 25 (3)*

Identifying a Serious Occurrence

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014, serious occurrences are defined as the following:

1. The **death of a child** who received child care at a child care centre;
2. **Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect** of a child while receiving child care at a child care centre;
3. A **life-threatening injury to** or a **life-threatening illness of** a child who receives child care at a child care centre;
4. An incident where a child who is receiving child care at a child care centre goes **missing** or is **temporarily unsupervised**, or
5. An **unplanned disruption of the normal operations** of a child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving care at a child care centre
 - a. Fire
 - b. Flood
 - c. Gas leak
 - d. Detection of carbon monoxide
 - e. Outbreak
 - f. Lockdown
 - g. Other emergency relocation or temporary closure
 - h. Public Health ordered closure

Procedures to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence

For Staff, Placement Students & Volunteers:

1. Immediately
 - Ask for assistance from other staff, placement students or volunteers.
 - Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training.
 - Call 911 and follow directions from emergency services personnel, where applicable.
 - Ensure that other children are removed from the scene and do not have access to the area, where applicable.
 - Address any risk to the health and safety of the child or other children present to prevent the risk of further harm.
 - Send someone to notify the Supervisor and Administrator immediately.
2. Ongoing after the incident:
 - Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. Police, CAS, Public Health, etc.)
 - Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
 - Contact parents as required.

3. Within 4 hours:

- Document the incident in the daily written record.
- Record the child's symptoms of illness, if applicable, or
- Complete an accident report, if applicable.
- Where an accident report is created, provide a signed copy to the parent of the child.
- Document any additional information that may be asked of the Management Team in order to understand the details of the situation.

For the Supervisor and Administrator:

1. Immediately

- Assist the children, other staff, placement students, volunteers and families.
- Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training.
- Call 911 and follow directions from emergency services personnel, where applicable.
- Contact parents as required.

2. Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:

- Collect all pertinent information to report the incident to the Ministry of Education as a serious occurrence, including:
 - A description of the incident;
 - The date, time, place where it occurred and actions taken and outcome;
 - The current status of the incident and child/parties involved; and
 - All other parties notified (e.g. emergency services, CAS, parents).

3. Report the serious occurrence in CCLS or notify the Ministry of Education Program Advisor by telephone or email where CCLS is not available. If the phone goes to voicemail, leave a message to have the Program Advisor return the call.

- Note: Where CCLS is not available, a serious occurrence will be submitted in CCLS as soon as it becomes available.

4. Post a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by the Centre at the front door so that it is visible and accessible to the parents without using identifying information such as children or staff names.

5. Ongoing and after the incident:

- Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. Police, CAS, Public Health, etc.)
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

- Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required, until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education.
- Where the Ministry of Education requests updates to a Serious Occurrence in CCLS, these will be provided as soon as possible through updated reports.
- Conduct an internal review of the serious occurrence with staff, placement students and volunteers to establish the next steps and reduce the probability of repeat occurrences.
- Provide children, parents, staff, placement students and volunteers with support and resources if needed.
- Review with staff, placement students and volunteers the Centre's program statement policies and procedures that set out prohibited practices and expectations of promoting the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all children.
- Document any Serious Occurrences reported to the Ministry of Education in the daily written journal.

Serious Occurrence Specific – Steps to Follow

1. **Death of a Child**

For Staff, Placement Students & Volunteers:

- If the death occurs while a child is receiving care, refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'

For the Supervisor and Administrator:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'
- a) If the death occurs while a child is receiving childcare
 - i) ***Immediately*** upon becoming aware of the incident, contact the parent of the child, or where the parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.
 - b) If the death occurs while a child is not receiving childcare
 - i) Within ***24 hours of becoming aware*** of the incident, contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) or police services to find out if there is an investigation.
 - ii) Contact the Program Advisor to discuss the reporting protocols.
 - iii) If there is an ongoing investigation, conduct an internal investigation after CAS or police services have completed their investigation, if applicable.

2. Abuse, Neglect or an Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect

For Staff, Placement Students & Volunteers:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'
- Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by any person, ***immediately:***
 - i) Report concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the Duty to Report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA).
 - ii) Document the conversation with CAS and follow their recommendations.
 - iii) Notify the Supervisor/Administrator of the incident and the report made to CAS, where appropriate.
 - iv) Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.
 - v) Maintain confidentiality at all times.

For the Supervisor and Administrator:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'
- Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by a staff, placement student or volunteer, or where a person has otherwise reported alleged abuse/neglect concerns to the Supervisor/Administrator ***immediately:***
 - i) Notify the person who reported concerns about their duty to report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA).
 - ii) Report the concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the CYFSA unless it is confirmed that a report has already been made to CAS.
 - iii) Document the concerns.
 - iv) Contact and notify the parent of the child, where appropriate.
 - v) Based on the nature of the allegation and under the direction of the CAS or internal policies, determine the next steps, such as disciplinary measures and additional actions, such as an internal investigation to protect children in care.
 - vi) Determine whether the individual alleged to have abused/neglected a child is registered with a professional regulatory body (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, etc.). If so:

Report the allegation of abuse to the appropriate regulatory body;

Report to the College of Early Childhood Educators when the employment of a registered early childhood educator (RECE) is suspended or terminated or if the RECE resigns.

- vii) Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.
 - viii) Maintain confidentiality at all times.
 - Once all external investigations are complete (e.g. by police and CAS), if applicable:
 - i) Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.
 - ii) Update all other authorities to whom the allegation was reported (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, CAS, etc.).
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3. **Life-threatening Injury or Life-threatening Illness**

For Staff, Placement Students & Volunteers:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'

For the Supervisor and Administrator:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'
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4. **Missing or Temporarily Unsupervised Child(ren)**

For Staff, Placement Students & Volunteers:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'

1. **Immediately** upon becoming aware that a child or children are missing:

- i) Alert the Supervisor/Administrator and all staff, placement students and volunteers;
 - ii) Search the childcare premises, including outdoor areas, including hallways, washrooms, playground, church, etc.
 - iii) Ensure that the remaining children are supervised at all times.
 - a) Where the child or children are **NOT FOUND** after being deemed missing:
 - i. Continue to search the premises.
 - ii. Update the Supervisor/Administrator.
 - b) Where the child or children **ARE FOUND** after being deemed missing:
 - i. Update the Supervisor/Administrator
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2. After the child or children have been found, after being deemed missing;
 - i) Document the incident in the daily written record.

For the Supervisor and Administrator:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'
1. ***Immediately*** upon becoming aware that a child or children are missing:
 - i) Assist with searching for the missing child(ren);
 - a) Where the child or children are **NOT FOUND** after being deemed missing:
 - i. Call 911 and follow directions from emergency services personnel.
 - ii. Contact the child(ren)'s parents, or where the parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.
 - b) Where the child or children **ARE FOUND** after being deemed missing:
 - ii. Update the child(ren)'s parents, or where a parent cannot be reached, the child(ren)'s emergency contact.
 2. After the child or children have been found, after being deemed missing;
 - i) Document the incident in the daily written record contained in the main office.
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5. *Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations*

- i) Fire
- ii) Flood
- iii) Gas Leak
- iv) Detection of Carbon Monoxide
- v) Outbreak
- vi) Lockdown
- vii) Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure
- viii) Public Health ordered closure

For Staff, Placement Students & Volunteers:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'

OUTBREAK:

- Where the incident is suspected to be an outbreak ***immediately***:
 - i) Notify the Supervisor/Administrator on site of concerns.
 - ii) Separate children who are showing symptoms of illness from other children.
 - iii) Follow the childcare centre's sanitary practices policy and procedures.
- Within **4 hours**:
 - i) Record symptoms of ill health in the affected child's records.
 - ii) Document the incident in the daily written record.

ALL OTHER DISRUPTIONS:

- ***Immediately*** follow the childcare centre's fire safety and evacuation plan or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.
- Within **4 hours**, document the incident in the daily written record.

For the Supervisor and Administrator:

- Refer to 'Procedure to Follow to Respond to a Serious Occurrence.'

OUTBREAK:

- ***Immediately*** contact the local Public Health Department.
- Where it is deemed an outbreak by Public Health, ***immediately***:
 - i) Follow instructions from the Public Health Department.
 - ii) Contact the parents of the affected child(ren) and ensure that the affected child(ren) is picked up by their parents or taken to hospital.
 - iii) Obtain an outbreak posting from the local Medical Officer of Health and post it at the front door of the Centre.
 - iv) *Note:* Outbreaks must be reported as a serious occurrence only if deemed an outbreak by Public Health.
- Within **4 hours**:
 - i) Notify all parents of the children enrolled at the childcare Centre of the outbreak.
 - ii) Document the incident in the daily written record in the main office.
- Where the incident is not deemed an outbreak, follow the sanitary practices policy.

ALL OTHER DISRUPTIONS:

- **Immediately** follow the childcare centre's fire safety and evacuation plan or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.
- Within **4 hours**, document the incident in the daily written record in the main office.
- *Note:* A hold and secure is not a reportable serious occurrence.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

- If any person, as well as someone who performs professional duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical or emotional harm or sexual exploitation or molestation inflicted by the person having charge of the child, the person will report the suspicion directly to a Children's Aid Society (CAS)
- Suspected abuse or neglect that will be reported will include physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect.
- Where a parent expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact their local CAS directly. The person who becomes aware of these concerns is also required to report the concerns to the l

Reporting Procedures for a Serious Occurrence

Preparing to Report a Serious Occurrence:

1. Staff, placement students or volunteers will report the aspects of the serious occurrence to the Administrator and Supervisor immediately, explaining who was affected, what, when and where it happened.
2. Those involved in the serious occurrence, whether directly or as a witness, must remain on site until all inquiries can be completed.
3. The Administrator or Supervisor will conduct initial interviews with those involved and take statements and documentation in writing.
4. Once all information is received from all parties involved and an updated report is received from the parents, the Administrator or Supervisor will determine if it is a reportable serious occurrence based on the reporting categories and definitions as set out in the reporting procedures.
5. If there is uncertainty about whether the occurrence is considered to be serious or not, contact will be made with the Program Advisor for guidance.
6. Follow-up with the families regarding the serious occurrence is mandatory.

7. Be aware of the 24-hour timeline.

Reporting a Serious Occurrence:

1. When a situation has been deemed a serious occurrence, a serious occurrence report must be submitted to the CCLS within 24 hours of the Administrator becoming aware of the occurrence.
2. Identifying information such as children or staff names will not be included in the serious occurrence reports.
3. If CCLS cannot be accessed, the Administrator, Supervisor or designate will notify the Program Advisor assigned to the Centre by email or by telephone within 24 hours of becoming aware of the occurrence. A serious occurrence report will be submitted to CCLS as soon as the system can be accessed.
4. Where a Ministry of Education Program Advisor cannot be reached by telephone, a voicemail message will be left to notify the Program Advisor of the incident.
5. All updates to the serious occurrences will be reported in CCLS through update reports until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education.
6. Where the Ministry of Education requests updates to a serious occurrence in CCLS, these will be provided as soon as possible through update reports.
7. All serious occurrences reported to the Ministry of Education will be documented in the daily journal in the main office and applicable program room.
8. Notification of all serious occurrences must be given to the President of the Board of Directors.
9. Suppose the situation would involve television cameras or reporters arriving at the Centre. In that case, every attempt must be made to speak with someone from the Ministry of Education and York Region Child Care Services. Contact must also be made with the Board President and, if necessary, the Centre's lawyer.
10. In the event where there is an allegation of abuse or neglect, the Centre is only required to notify the Program Advisor of a serious occurrence *if* the alleged abuse or neglect occurred while the child was receiving care at the child care centre.

Note: All updates to the serious occurrence, whether requested by the Ministry or reported by the parent or Centre, will be reported in CCLS through update reports until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education.

Communicating with the Media

In the event of a Serious Occurrence, there is always the possibility of media interest. A reporter may show up outside of the facility, send you an email or contact you by phone

looking for information about something that has happened. If the media are asking you to respond to an emergency:

Do:

- Understand the media's right to the story.
- It would be best if you influenced how it will be written or presented.
- Return the media's phone call.
- Be polite, respectful and helpful.
- Contact the Administrator immediately, who will, in turn, contact the Ministry of Education and York Region Children's Services.
- Prepare a written statement that gives the basic facts clearly and concisely.
- Answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.
- Communication should be protective of the children and families involved.
- Negotiate interview terms: Time and location.

Don't:

- Ignore the reporter.
- Feel the need to answer the reporter's questions on the spot.
- Ask the reporter what information they would like to know and get back to them as soon as possible with the most up-to-date information.
- Block access.
- Blame others for the situation.
- Talk with the media "off the record."

Posting a Serious Occurrence Summary (Notification Form)

The following process will be followed for posting the Serious Occurrence Summary Form:

1. After submitting the Serious Occurrence online to the Ministry of Education, the Administrator or Supervisor will be required to complete a Serious Occurrence Summary Form to communicate information to parents about any Serious Occurrences that have occurred at Faith Infant & Early Education Centre. This form is to be posted within a 24-hour time of becoming aware of the serious occurrence.
2. The Management Team shall post the Serious Occurrence Summary Form at the front door of the Centre so that it is visible and accessible to parents.
 - The form will include a summary of the serious occurrence and any action taken by the childcare Centre.
 - It will not include the names of any child or staff involved.
3. The Management Team will update and re-post the Serious Occurrence Notification Form as additional actions or investigations are completed.

4. The Serious Occurrence Summary Form will be posted for a minimum of 10 business days, regardless of the serious occurrence type and the status of any related investigation.
5. Where a serious occurrence is updated or revised, the summary will also be updated to reflect the changes. The form will remain posted for an additional 10 days from the date of the update.
6. Serious Occurrence Notification Forms will be made available for current and prospective parents, licensing and municipal children's services staff upon request.

Protection of Personal Information and Privacy

Faith Infant & Early Education Centre will ensure that information posted in the Serious Occurrence Summary Form protects personal information and privacy.

1. The summary will not include identifying information such as a child or staff name, initials, child's age, or date of birth.
2. No age group identifiers are to be used, e.g. preschool room, toddler room, and
3. The language used will remain gender-neutral.

Complaints

Complaints regarding operational, physical or safety standards at childcare centres are not considered to be a Serious Occurrence. All complaints of this nature are managed in-house under the **Conflict Resolution Policy**. This policy is in place to support open discussions between the Centre and its parents through a fair and transparent process. The policy sets out clear and consistent standards for the Centre to ensure that issues and concerns are addressed in a timely and transparent manner. It is intended to support communication and positive relationships between the Centre and its parents.

Please refer to the Parent Handbook under Section 10: General Policies.

Should the Centre receive a complaint regarding an incident that relates to one of the defined serious occurrence categories listed above, the incident itself will be reported to the Ministry of Education but not the complaint itself.

Annual Review

It is the best practice of Faith Infant and Early Education to review, on an annual basis, all Serious Occurrences that happened within the given year. An annual review is used as a method of identifying any issues and trends in the Centre.

All legislated policies and procedures, including this Serious Occurrence Policy, are reviewed and monitored on an annual basis and, as required, in the event of legislative or

Ministry changes. Policies are reviewed with all Employees, placement students and volunteers. We hope that regular review and monitoring that support the delivery of our services will help make those more aware of their roles and responsibilities and better equip them to provide for the health, safety and well-being of the children in care.

Record Keeping

Faith Infant & Early Education Centre will retain the Serious Occurrence Summary Form on file for at least *three years* from the date it was created or the date of the last update, whichever date is most recent.

All files and reports are kept in a secure location at the Centre.

Ontario Regulation 137/15

1 Definitions "serious occurrence" means,

- (a) the death of a child who received child care at a home child care premises or child care centre,
- (b) abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre,
- (c) a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a home child care premises or child care centre,
- (d) an incident where a child who is receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or
- (e) an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a home child care premises or child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the home child care premises or child care centre

38. (1) Every licensee shall ensure that,

- (a) there are written policies and procedures with respect to serious occurrences in each child care centre operated by the licensee and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care, that address, at a minimum, how to identify, respond to and report a serious occurrence;
- (b) a report is provided to a program adviser of any serious occurrence in any child care centre operated by the licensee or any premises where it oversees the provision of home child care within 24 hours of the licensee or supervisor becoming aware of the occurrence;
- (c) a summary of the report provided under clause (b) and of any action taken as a result is posted for at least 10 business days in a conspicuous place at the child care centre or home child care premises; and
- (d) the summary of the report is kept in accordance with section 82. O. Reg. 137/15, s. 38; O. Reg. 126/16, s. 25 (1, 2); O. Reg. 51/18, s. 16.