

6.1 Authorised Contact Persons/Collection of Children

Applies to: All Koorana staff working in Preschools and families attending Koorana Preschools and visitors.

Purpose

1. To ensure only persons duly authorised by the parent/guardian are able to collect a child from the Preschool.
2. To ensure that where parents/guardians are not contactable that Preschool has been given authorisation to contact other nominated persons to ensure the wellbeing of the child.

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Approved by: CEO

Policy context: This policy relates to

Standards or other external requirements	National Quality Standards – Quality Area 2 – Standard 2.3, Element 2.3.2 http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf
Legislation or other requirements	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104 Education and Care Services National Regulations [Regulation 99; (2)(f)(m) under Regulation 168] http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-regulations Children and Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998 http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/157 Any court orders in place
Contractual obligations	N/A
Resources	Child Care Service Handbook (Department of Education & Training) https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook

Documents related to this policy

Related policies	Admissions, Enrolment and Orientation
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	<p>Preschool Enrolment Information Form</p> <p>Additional Authorisation for Pickup of Children & Emergency Contacts Form</p> <p>Temporary Verbal Authorisation Form</p> <p>Sign Out Book</p> <p>Late Collection Form</p> <p>Late Collection Register</p> <p>Fact Sheet on Koorana's Collection and Late Collection Requirements</p>

Definitions
<p><i>"Koorana" means Koorana Child and Family Services Incorporated.</i></p> <p><i>"Parents" includes a legal guardian.</i></p> <p><i>"Visitors" includes students, volunteers, visiting professionals, performers and contractors.</i></p> <p><i>"Staff" is a Koorana staff member working in the Preschool, e.g. Educator, Administrator or Key Worker. This may also include other Koorana staff such as Case Managers, Early Linker, Therapists, Head Office Administrators, Home and Community Based Key Workers and Koorana Management when visiting or working in the Preschool.</i></p> <p><i>"Authorised Nominee for collection of Child" is a person who has been given permission by a parent or family member to collect the child from the education and care service or the family day care educator (Education and Care Services National Regulation).</i></p> <p><i>"Emergency Nominee" is a person the service can contact in the event of an emergency and where the parent is not immediately contactable.</i></p> <p><i>"Medical Treatment Authorised Nominee" is a person nominated as being able to consent to medical treatment of the child or to authorise the administration of medication to the child.</i></p> <p><i>"Court Order" means a direction issued by a court or a judge requiring a person to do or not do something.</i></p>

POLICY STATEMENT

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires that parents of children attending an approved education and care service provide details of persons authorised to ensure the wellbeing of the child in the absence of a parent/guardian. This policy outlines the processes for releasing children from Preschool into the care of an adult.

Furthermore, Koorana Preschools have strict operational conditions imposed by our licences, and only have staff available to supervise and care for children within the hours of each Preschool. Thus, children in Preschool must be collected by an Authorised Person by 3:30 pm.

In the event of an emergency or illness Koorana will contact

- an Emergency Contact Person who is also an Authorised Person
- any other Emergency Contact Person (who will not be able to collect the child unless a parent provides them with a temporary verbal authorisation).

Koorana will, wherever possible, obtain for each child the details of at least one Authorised Person who is not a parent and at least one Emergency Contact Person who is not a parent. A person may be an Authorised Person and an Emergency Contact Person, or may have just one of these roles.

PRACTICES

Child release authorisation

Authorisation via the enrolment form

Prior to commencement of the first day of the child's enrolment the parents must provide on the enrolment form

- details in writing of every Authorised Person including at least one who is not a parent - details to include the person's full name, residential address, telephone number and relationship to the child – where the Authorised Person is not a parent, the parents must also provide written authorisation for Koorana to release the child into that person's care
- details in writing of Emergency Contact Persons including at least one who is not a parent – details to include the person's full name, residential address, telephone number and relationship to the child – where an Emergency Contact Person is not a parent, the parents must also provide written authorisation for Koorana to contact that person in the event of illness or an emergency.

Where parents do not have someone they can provide as an Authorised Person or as an Emergency Contact Person educators will support them to create connections with people who could fulfil that role (e.g. connecting them with other preschool parents).

The Preschool will remind parents on a regular basis to review their Authorised Persons and Emergency Contact Persons, and update these where necessary.

Other methods of Authorisation

At other times, the parent/guardian is able to nominate other persons who are authorised to collect their child on a temporary basis. Ideally, the Preschool will be notified in writing, providing full details of the person and the date that specifically applies to this authorisation.

Under exceptional circumstances parents may nominate and authorise a person to collect their child over the phone. The parent will be required to give full details over the phone and this will need to be recorded by staff. Two Koorana staff members are required to talk to the parent to confirm the verbal

authorisation, and to record the temporary authorisation on a Temporary Verbal Authorisation Form to be filed in the child's records

Parental access

Parents are able to collect their child from the Preschool at a time that is convenient and that meets the needs of that parent. Should staff have a concern regarding a parent posing a risk to the safety of the children or staff at Preschool they do not have to grant entry to that parent, even if that parent has parenting rights (Education and Care Services National Regulations).

Court Orders

The Preschool must be provided with a certified copy of any court orders at the time of enrolment of the child or after the making of any subsequent court order. Staff will adhere to court orders in respect to releasing a child to a parent/guardian, or providing access to a parent/guardian. It is at the discretion of the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person" to contact the police if it is considered that the child, other children, or staff are at risk of harm by adhering to the court order. Strategies for dealing with each individual situation will be discussed by the Preschool Leader and the custodial parent/guardian upon provision of a copy of any court order. When required staff are to follow the Management of Critical Incidents policy if a prohibited parent enters the Preschool.

Releasing Children

Staff are not permitted to release a child into the care of any person other than a parent, who has parenting rights, unless they have been nominated.

Staff can, having established the identity of an Authorised Person, release a child to that Authorised Person

- at the end of the preschool day, or
- where a child is unable to continue with the preschool day (e.g. due to illness or injury), or
- at any time when a parent requests.

The identity of the Authorised Person must be established by staff. Their identity can be established by either

- Staff knowing that the individual is an Authorised Person and being able to positively identify them through the staff previous interactions with them (this identification involves, for example: knowing them by sight and/or sound; being familiar with their relationship with the child), or
- Viewing the written authorisation on file and viewing the person's photo identification.

Should a person wearing a veil come to collect a child, a female staff member will ask the person to remove the veil so the person can be adequately identified. For cultural and privacy reason this will occur in a separate room with only the person collecting and the female staff member present.

Although parents have granted permission to an Authorised Nominee we do ask that should an Authorised Nominee be collecting a child that the parent/guardian will notify the Preschool where possible.

Where a person authorised in writing or over the phone by a parent or guardian to collect their child is aged 18 years or over, they will be required to provide photo identification to staff at the time of collection of the child. If there is any doubt as to the identification of the authorised person, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately for verification prior to release of the child.

Where a person authorised is aged less than 18 years of age, the following considerations will apply:

- The age of the collecting child.
- Familiarity of the collecting child.
- The distance home, including mode of transport.

In these circumstances, the Preschool Leader will:

- Require notification in writing from the parent detailing specific dates and the mode of transport home.
- Ask to meet the collecting child prior to the first collection. This must be in the presence of the parent to verify the collecting child's identity.

The Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person" retains the discretion to refuse to release a child if the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person" deems the child/ren will be at risk of harm in any way. The Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person" will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact if this situation arises.

If an unauthorised person presents to collect a child

- the child's parent will be immediately informed and authorisation for that person to collect the child obtained if appropriate
- the authorisation can be obtained over the phone, with two Koorana staff members being required to talk to the parent to confirm the verbal authorisation, and to record the temporary authorisation on a Temporary Verbal Authorisation Form to be filed in the child's records
- photo identification of the person must be viewed
- the staff will suggest that the parent consider registering that person as an Authorised Person in writing on the Additional Authorisation for Pickup of Children & Emergency Contacts Form
- the verbal authorisation is temporary and only applies to the day it is made - this procedure must be followed each time a child is released to that person until such time as the parents register that person as an Authorised Person in writing.

A child cannot be released to any person except an Authorised Person or a person who has temporary verbal authorisation. The only exception is a person representing a government body who has the relevant authority (e.g. Department of Family & Community Services).

Collection and Child Safety

On occasion a parent or authorised person may attend to collect a child while under the influence of a drug or alcohol, or present in such a manner as to suggest his or her ability to safely collect a child is impaired. Koorana owes a duty of care to the children in our care to ensure their safety is paramount and we must comply with our obligations under NSW child protection laws. In circumstances where the collection of a child poses a potential risk to a child's safety that cannot be addressed by alternative means the child will not be released into their care. Koorana Management will be informed of the incident and child protection authorities or police will be notified and advice sought as to how to proceed.

Failure to Collect Child at End of Day

Children must be collected by an Authorised Person by the specified times. Where a child has not been collected by an Authorised Person by the specified times then the following procedures will be followed:

Time	Action	Who By
3:30 pm	Children must be collected before this time	
3:35 pm	If a child is not collected by this time then the Preschool will immediately call the Authorised Person who normally collects the child to confirm the arrangements for collecting the child and remind them of the required pick-up time and related policy. If this person cannot be contacted then the preschool will contact another Authorised Person.	Preschool staff
3:45 pm	If a child is not collected by this time then the preschool will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • again contact, or endeavour to contact, any Authorised Person (including through any Emergency Contact Person) • contact the Service Operations Manager Inner West to make plans for staffing the preschool after 4:00 pm in the event the child is not collected. 	Preschool Leader or Responsible Person

Time	Action	Who By
4:00 pm	Where a child has not been collected by this time then two Koorana staff, as arranged by Preschool Leader or Responsible Person, in consultation with the Service Operations Manager Inner West, will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain with the child on the preschool premises • continue efforts to contact an Authorised Person • keep the Service Operations Manager Inner West informed. 	Designated two staff members
4:30 pm	If the child has not been collected by this time then Koorana will contact the local police to ask for their assistance in locating the parents or any other authorised person.	Service Operations Manager Inner West (or Executive Team Member)
5:00 pm	If the child has not been collected by this time then Koorana will contact the Care and Protection helpline (133 627) at Family and Community Services to inform them that the child is “in need of care” and request that they make arrangements to provide this care.	Service Operations Manager Inner West (or Executive Team Member)

Informing Parents/Guardians of Requirements and Procedures

Upon enrolment, at orientation, and on a regular basis throughout the year the preschool will inform parents and guardians of the policies and procedures on the collection of children.

When an Authorised Person does arrive late to collect a child (any time after 3:30 pm) they will be required to complete a Late Collection Form (in addition to the Sign Out record), and will be given a Fact Sheet on Koorana’s Collection and Late Collection Requirements as a reminder. Staff will provide the completed Late Collection Form to the preschool Administrator to record in the Late Collection Register.

Repeated Late Collection

On the third and subsequent occasions where a child has been collected late (any time after 3:30 pm) then a late collection fee of \$10 per 5 minutes (or part thereof) applies. This fee contributes to covering staff and other costs incurred by the late collection.

Where a pattern of late collection persists after 3 occasions, or where instances of late collection are disruptive, Koorana management will meet with the family and termination of the child’s enrolment may occur as they are in breach of their service agreement.

Emergencies

An emergency may constitute an accident or illness requiring medical or dental treatment, or when the parent/guardian has failed to collect the child by the closing time of the service.

If the emergency contact is required to collect the child from the service for any reason, then they also need to be an Authorised Nominee. The child will be released once photo identification has been sighted. In normal circumstances, any emergency contact listed on the enrolment forms should be aged 18 years or over.

An emergency nominee would also be notified in an emergency, for example to meet a child at the hospital.

Medical Treatment Authorised Nominee

A Medical Treatment Authorised Nominee is a person nominated as being able to consent to medical treatment of the child or to authorise the administration of medication to the child.

Where it is determined that immediate treatment is required the Preschool will in the event of an emergency contact the relevant emergency services prior to attempting to contact parents or Authorised Nominees, regardless of whether or not a parent has provided them with approval to contact emergency services, or access medical treatment.