

Access, Arrival and Departure of Children

Inner West Council Children's Services have developed these Guiding Principles (GP) and consider them to be the policies and procedures required by law under the NSW Education & Care Services Regulations (2011 SI 653) – NSW Legislation. These Guiding Principles are relevant to all stakeholders including educators, staff, families and community who attend or visit our learning services.

Purpose:

Inner West Council has a responsibility to families and children to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child during the arrival to and departure from any of our services.

Meaningful partnerships between families and our teams will support the safe arrival and departure of children, adequate supervision, attentive handover and the prevention of entry of unauthorised persons.

Our teams and families must follow the correct safety procedures to reduce potential risks.

Inner West Council acknowledges the importance of the child/family bond and will ensure parents/carers have access to their children when required.

Accurate records documenting each child's time of arrival and departure will be maintained.

Guiding Principles and Embedded Practice:

The service team will be:

- available to exchange information with families about their child on an ongoing basis, at a mutually convenient time.
- aware each time children are leaving the service and who they are leaving with.
- aware of the child's authorisation details on the enrolment form (including court orders and AVOs) and know how to access each child's details.

Families are responsible for:

- ensuring details of emergency contacts & persons authorised to collect or drop their child are completed **in full** on their child's electronic enrolment form **prior** to any drop-off or pick-up times.
- advising and reminding the above nominated persons to bring photo identification (such as driver's license) each time they drop off or collect a child from care.
- sharing information about who will be dropping or collecting their child each day, or the addition or deletion of authorised contacts for their child in the online enrolment form.
- supervising their children, including those who do not attend the service, while they are on the premises.
- delivering their child to an educator at drop off and engaging with an educator when collecting their child.
- arriving at least 15 minutes prior to the centre's closing time to support children's emotional regulation, communication and centre closing procedures.
- ensuring their child is off the premises before the close of business.
- purposefully closing all gates and doors behind them to prevent other children from exiting.

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Authorised delivery and collection of children (Regulation 99):

Children are only permitted to leave the premises if the child is:

(4)(a) Given into the care of a parent of the child; or

- an authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record or;
- a person authorised by a parent (or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record) to collect the child from the premises; or

(b) leaves the premises in accordance with written authorisation of the child's parent (or authorised nominee named in the enrolment record) ; or

(c) is taken on an excursion in accordance with Division 6 of the Regulations; or

(ca) is transported by the service or on transportation arranged by the service in accordance with Division 7; or

(d) is given into the care of a person, or taken outside the premises –

- because the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment, or
- because of another emergency.

Parents are requested to provide authorisation on the Inner West Council online portal at time of enrolment to give permission for the service to:

- Transport their child in the event of emergency/critical incident under the direction of emergency services.
- Transport their child in the event of program change (weather event) whilst on excursion.

If educators do not know, recognise or identify any person who arrives to collect a child:

They should check before they release the child:

- with other educators if this person is known to them; and/or:
- the authorised persons section on the child's enrolment form and sight photographic identification to confirm.

This is true even if the person collecting the child is a parent of the child that the educator has not met before or cannot identify by sight. Photo identification must be requested and checked each time to confirm identity, if educators are unsure.

Children will only be permitted to leave the service with persons listed on the enrolment form unless prior arrangements have been made with the Nominated Supervisor/ FDC educator in writing. This information must be passed on to all educators (written down in the communication book or sign in/off book/timesheet).

Siblings must be 16 years or older: to drop off OR collect the child and must be nominated as an authorised person to collect on Council's online portal.

Note: 'Parent' does not include a parent prohibited by a court order from having contact with a child (Reg 99(5)). See 'Court Orders forbidding contact with the child' in this Guiding Principle.

Families and Educators working together for safe handover of children

Educators:

- will be available to exchange information with families about their child.
- must be aware of when children are leaving the service and who they are leaving with.
- ensure they have identified all persons collecting the child from the service.
- remind all children on site, even under the supervision of their parents, of the suitable behavior expected on the premises to ensure everyone's safety.

Families are responsible for:

- supervising and ensuring the safety of their child before they release them to an educator each morning *and* when they enter the play space to collect their child each afternoon.
- bringing their child to an educator upon arrival.
- sharing relevant information with educators about their child.
- arriving at least 15 minutes prior to the centre's closing time to support children's emotional regulation, communication and centre closing procedures.
- ensuring their child is left in the care of educators only during licensed hours and is removed from the premises before the close of business hours. A late fee will be charged for each child if they are not collected within the opening hours of the service. Refer to Fees Schedule.
- supervising any child they bring onto the premises (enrolled or other) and ensure that the child behaves appropriately whilst on the premises.
- Be aware of the program, other children, educators, and other families around them while they are engaging in meaningful conversations on site. If the children are engaged in a story, for example, showing respect by speaking quietly and standing out of the way of other families entering and exiting the play space.

Upon enrolment, the NS will ensure families are made aware of:

- Our Access, Arrival and Departure of Children guiding principle.
- Gates and doors are to be purposely closed behind them as they enter and exit the premises.
- They are not to allow another adult that they do not know to be a parent of the service, to enter the service behind them.
- No other enrolled child is to be allowed to exit any gate or door with a parent other than their own.
- The parent or authorised nominee remains responsible for their child while they are on the service's premises.

Accurate attendance records and information keeping

It is the responsibility of the parent/authorised nominee to:

- sign their child in and out of the service upon arrival and departure each day.
- advise the educators of any health concerns experienced by their child that morning, or the previous evening, including the administration of any medication.
- keep the service updated regarding changes to contact details, the issuing of a parenting plan or court orders.

It is the responsibility of the educators to:

- maintain an accurate paper or electronic record of daily attendance, including the name of each child, arrival and departure times, signature of the parent or authorised nominee delivering and collecting the child.
- mark the child as absent by 10 am on the online portal if they do not attend that day. Contact may be made with the family to confirm the reason for the absence if required (particularly if they went home unwell the previous day or there has been an outbreak of an infectious disease). Children who often arrive after 10 am as part of their family routine may be marked absent if they do not arrive by 11 am.

Court Orders forbidding contact with the child

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators must ensure that a person who has been forbidden by court order from having contact with a child **MUST NOT** be:

- given any information concerning the child.
- allowed to enter the service or educator's home while the child is attending.
- permitted to collect the child from any service (including FDC).

If possible, a photograph of this individual should be obtained, and all educators should be aware of this individual's appearance.

A parent cannot stop another parent from collecting their child from care without an AVO or Court Order documents. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the service is aware of any such documents, updated as changes present and provide copies of the documentation.

Access to your child while in our care

Families are welcome to contact the service via the landline or email for information about their child at any time during day. Our open-door policy welcomes families to the service at any time; however, we do ask parents to be mindful of visiting children who struggle with separation from their loved ones or who are still settling into care. Children who become upset will need to leave with the visiting parent.

Breastfeeding parents are welcome to attend the service at any time to feed or pump breastmilk for their baby. A safe space will be provided to support breastfeeding families.

School-aged children are not permitted to use their mobile phones while in care.

Barriers to Collection

Possible intoxication of adult collecting: Parents cannot be denied access to their child or prevented from leaving a service with their child (without a Court Order or Custody agreement).

If the educator believes any adult who arrives to collect a child from care is deemed unfit; e.g. under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the educator should use his/her best endeavors to ensure the safety of the child; i.e. offer the adult a cup of tea in order to detain the adult and child while phone contact is made with another person on their enrolment form authorised to collect the child.

If the person insists on taking the child, the educator must allow the child to go. In this instance:

- phone the police immediately on 000 or your local police station to inform them of the situation;
- Contact your NS if they are not at the service;
- Contact your IWC Operations Manager;
- you may also be required to contact the Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ), and/or the Child Protection Helpline 13 21 11.

An unauthorised person comes to collect the child: The child's family will be contacted and if the person was sent by them, they will be requested to enter this person's name onto the online childcare management system prior to the child being released. Photo identification is required to confirm their identity.

Should this not be possible due to extenuating circumstances or in the case of an emergency, the NS or RP will decide if sufficient information has been provided to ensure the child leaves the premises with an authorised person. Contact your IWC Operations Manager who will also be available to assist you.

Under no circumstances will educators release a child without the family's or authorities' permission.

Daily Closure Procedure

Two educators are to:

- visually check all rooms and spaces at the end of each day (including cot room/sleep room/bedrooms and bathrooms) to ensure no child remains on the premises. Once the educators are confident that all children have been signed out and have left the premises, the educators sign out and leave the premises at the end of their rostered shift time.
- be onsite (minimum of two educators) during all licensed hours regardless of whether children are in attendance.

Families are expected to be respectful of our licensing hours, the personal commitment of our team and the understanding that our team has the right to leave the working environment on time. Families must arrive at least 15 minutes prior to closing time to support smooth handover and transition for the child.

Children's Voices and Agency

Our teams listen to children's voices both verbal and non-verbal (such as body language or cues) to ensure each child feels supported when they say goodbye to their family upon arrival and farewell our educators and their friends upon departure of our care.

Strategies to support each child and their family will be discussed within the team if we identify children struggling to separate from their loved ones upon arrival. These strategies may include shorter attendance times while the child is transitioning into our environment, taking the hand of an educator to wave goodbye from the window, a special toy or teddy bear which helps the child settle. These are only some of the strategies we may use to support children.

We ask families to arrive with enough time each morning and each afternoon to bid farewell to their child, or in the afternoon to their friends and educators, and to support transition to and from our service.

Open communication and working together between our team and families is valued to ensure children feel confident to wave their loved one's goodbye and enjoy their time within our care.

If a child expresses to an educator their concern about leaving with an authorised person, we will do our best to listen to the voice of that child and work with them and the family for a positive outcome for all.

OSHC Attendance and Absences

Educators:

- transporting OSHC children must sign them in and out at the service.
- will complete a roll call of all children in attendance against all children booked.
- check all children in attendance at least once, part way through the afternoon care session.

Families must:

- inform educators if a child is absent from school and/or will not be attending OSHC any enrolled day.
- provide advance notice to the service in writing if their child/ren will be absent from care due to planned family holidays or school camp.

Attendance of activities outside of OSHC

Children may participate in extracurricular activities that have not been organised by, or held at, the OSHC service (such as dance group, sport or music) if:

- the activity is held within school grounds of the OSHC Service, during operating hours;
- the IWC Before & After School Extra Curricular activities onsite only form is completed in full by the parent (or authorised nominee) prior to the child's first day of attendance of that activity.

The IWC Before & After School Extra Curricular activities onsite only form:

- can be completed by families at the beginning of the year/term or when the activity changes;
- gives permission each child to attend the activity for individual terms or the full calendar year;
- Identifies by name the person who collect and return to OSHC the child/ren who attending the activity;
- gives permission for the named person conducting the activity to sign the child/ren in and out of the service;
- acknowledges that the parent accepts that their child/ren attending and travelling to and from activities during OSHC sessions will not be under the supervision of educators working within the IWC OSHC service;
- Acknowledges that the parent understands IWC duty of care is terminated when permission is given in writing for their child/children to leave the premises at a certain time.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the name of the above form is updated as required, , especially if the person collecting the child/ren is going to change. The service will not release children into the care of other persons without written permission.

Children attending Extra Curricular activities must be:

- signed out when leaving for the activity by the authorised person conducting the activity. A sign in/out sheet will be available to record this information.
- returned to the service and a staff member advised of their return. Children cannot be left to make their own way back to the service.
- signed back into care on their return with the time they returned noted.
- In the event a session is cancelled, parents must notify the service prior to 2.30pm.
- In the event a child is not returned by 6.00pm, the child has been signed out and is the responsibility of the person that signed your child out. Please ensure you have the contact details of the relevant person associated with the extracurricular activity.

Legislative Requirements:

Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Section 170	Offence relating to unauthorised nominees on education and care service premises (applies to an education and care service operating in a participating jurisdiction that has a working with children law)
Regulation 86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Regulation 87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Regulation 99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
Regulation 100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
Regulation 101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
Regulation 102	Authorisation for excursions
Regulation 102 AAB	Safe arrival of children policies and procedures
Regulation 102 AAC	Risk assessment for the purposes of safe arrival of children policies and procedures
Regulation 102 A	Application of Division
Regulation 102B	Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child
Regulation 102C	Conduct of risk assessment for transporting children by the education and care service
Regulation 102D	Authorisation for service to transport children
Regulation 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Regulation 123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
Regulation 157	Access for parents
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
Regulation 160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
Regulation 161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care service
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Definitions:

ACECQA – Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority
 EYLF – Early Years Learning Framework
 FDC – Family Day Care Officers
 GP – Guiding Principles
 IWC – Inner West Council
 NQF – National Quality Framework
 NQS – National Quality Standard
 NS – Nominated Supervisor
 RP – Responsible Person
 OSHC – Out of School Hours Care
 Educators – all staff responsible for supervising and educating children.
 Staff or Team – all staff including administration officers, cooks and educators.

Related Legislation and Online Resources:

- Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW): Sections 165 & 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Sections 84, 99, 158, 159, 165, 168 & 175
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). National Quality Standards: Quality Areas 2, 6, & 7
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011: Division 3
- [13-Six-steps-staff-policies-procedures v3.pdf](#)

Related Guiding Principles Policies, Forms & Attachments:

Enrolment Form
 IWC Before & After School Extra Curricular activities onsite only form Fees Schedule
 Authorisation by Parent/Guardian – Acceptance and Refusal
 Child Protection
 Privacy and Records
 Late Collection of Children – Parent Notification Form
 Placement, Enrolment and Attendance

Version Control

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1		Merged legacy protocols	February 2020
2	Senior Manager Children's Services	Consistent terminology	June 2020
3	Operations Managers Children Services	Re-write based on evaluation	August 2024

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I have read and I understand this Access, Arrival and Departure of Children Guiding Principle. I agree to adhere to the requirements and procedures as outlined. I know how to access this Guiding Principle should I need to refer to it at any time to support me in my role to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is always maintained.

[illegible]