Safe Arrival, Dismissal & Release Of Child Policy			
Manual:	Child Care Centres	POLICY #:	**4.2**
Source:	CCEYA s.50 AQI	Section:	Program Administration
Replaces Policy Dated:	May 5, 2022	Revision Date:	January 1, 2024

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to support the safe arrival and dismissal of children attending Network Child Care Services' ("Network") child care programs.

This policy will provide Network staff and parents/guardians with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities 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 child care centre at the expected time, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of a child.

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.

POLICY

Network Child Care Services ("Network") follows the policy details and procedures below for the safe arrival and release of children attending Network's child care program.

DETAILS

1. Network Child Care Services (Network) will ensure that any child enrolled and receiving child care in one of Network's child care programs is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care staff may release the child to. Parents/guardians are required to inform Network's Supervisor, in writing, when there is a change or addition to the individuals authorized to pick up their child from care.

2. Network child care staff will only release a child to another individual over the age of twelve (12) years with prior written permission from the parent/guardian.

3. Network child care staff will not release a child enrolled in the child care program without adult supervision, or to walk home from the child care program unless there are extenuating circumstances, and written authorization is obtained from the parent/guardian. All requests for Network to release a child to walk home alone shall be reviewed by Network's Site Supervisor and Program Manager, and specific instructions shall be developed in collaboration with the child's parent/guardian.

4. Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, child care staff must follow the Safe Arrival and Dismissal Procedures set out below.

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5. **Methods of Parent/Guardian Communication:** Parents/guardians are required to inform the child care program staff of any changes in their child's drop off or pick up arrangement, or if their child will be absent or late arrival to the child program for each day, by using one of the following methods of communication:

   i. Phone call to the child care centre's Site Supervisor or Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE).
   ii. Leaving a phone voice mail message.
   iii. Written notice.
   iv. Email.
   v. Storypark.
   vi. Text message (for Before and After School Programs with no land line).

PROCEDURES

Safe Arrival of a Child into Care

1. Each child's arrival and departure times shall be discussed with the Site Supervisor of the child care program, at the time of registration and orientation to the child care program. Parents/guardians are required to inform the Site Supervisor if there are changes to the agreed upon arrival or departure times.

   a. **Infant, Toddler and Preschool Program.**
   For a child enrolled in Network's Infant, Toddler, or Preschool program, the child's parent/guardian is required to call the child care centre by 9:00 a.m. to inform the Site Supervisor or child care program staff if their child will be arriving late, or if their child will be absent each day.

   b. **Kindergarten and School Age Program**
   For a child enrolled in Network's Kindergarten or School Age Before and After School Programs (B&A Program), the child's parent/guardian is required to call or send a detailed text message to the B&A Program by 9:00 a.m. to inform the staff if their child will be arriving late or if their child will be absent.

2. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, the child care program staff in the room must:

   i. Greet the parent/guardian and child.

   ii. Ask the child's parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the child's file on Network's *Application and Emergency Information Form* and/or *Authorization to Release Child Form (5.46).* Where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).

   iii. Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.

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iv. Complete the *Daily Health Check*.

v. Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a Child Has Not Arrived at the Child Care Centre by 10:00 a.m.

For Children Enrolled in Network's Full Day Child Care Programs (Infant, Toddler, Preschool Programs and Non-Instructional School Days for Kindergarten and School Age Children):

1. Where a child who is enrolled in Network's full day program does not arrive at the child care centre by 10:00 a.m. and the child's parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off time or advised of the child's absence (e.g., by calling the child care centre, leaving a voice message, or advising the closing staff at pick-up on the prior day), the program staff in the classroom must:

a. Immediately inform the child care centre Site Supervisor or designate. The Site Supervisor or program staff must commence contacting the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) by 10:05 a.m. by telephone, at their home, mobile, work or other contact number provided by the parent/guardian. Staff will leave a detailed message if the parent/guardian does not respond.

b. If no response from the parent/guardian is received **after 10 minutes**, the Site Supervisor, designate or program staff, will continue to call the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) **every 10 minutes,** up to 30 minutes, and send an email and message via program's communication app (i.e. Storypark) to the parent/guardians advising them of the child's absence.

c. If after 30 minutes of unsuccessful attempts to contact the child's parent/guardian to confirm the child's absence as per the procedure above, the Site Supervisor, designate, or program staff will contact the emergency contact individuals listed on the child's Application and Emergency Information Form to assist in reaching the parent/guardian.

d. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, the program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the Daily Written Record.

For Kindergarten and School Age Children Enrolled in the Before or After School Program:

2. Where a child enrolled in the Before School Program does not arrive by the time the school bell rings, no additional steps will be taken, since the school will follow their own protocol regarding safe arrival.

For non-instructional school days, the procedures in #1, above, will be followed.

3. Where a Kindergarten or School Age child enrolled in the After School program, does not arrive at the After Schol program 10 minutes after the school dismissal bell, the After School program staff will immediately inform the Site Supervisor, or designate. The Site Supervisor will check the child's attendance with the school's office to determine if the child was absent

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from school, or dismissed earlier.

4. If the Site Supervisor/designate is unable to confirm the child's absence with the school, the Site Supervisor will check the school premises to locate the child. If the child is not located, the Site Supervisor will contact the child's parent/guardian by calling and leaving a detailed message and sending a text message. If after 10 minutes, no response is received from the child's parent, an email will be sent to the parent/guardian requesting confirmation of absence.

5. If after speaking with child's parent/guardian it is confirmed that the child attended school and was expected to arrive at the After School program, but did not arrive, the Site Supervisor will contact the police to report the missing child.

Safe Release of a Child from the Child Care Program

1. Parents/guardians are required to list any individual authorized to pick up their children on Network's *Application and Emergency Information Form.*

2. Parents/guardians who cannot pick up their child from the child care centre are required to inform the Site Supervisor or the Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) responsible for their child, as soon as possible. Parents/guardians are required to provide the child care staff with the name and description of the person authorized to pick up their child. Any person authorized to pick up a child from the child care centre must show identification to the child care staff member on duty before the child can be released.

3. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
   a. the child care staff will confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
   b. where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian, or authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian or authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

4. Once a parent/guardian, or authorized individual arrives to pick up their child, they assume responsibility for their child, and the child care staff member on duty shall record the child's pick-up time on the attendance record.

Custody Agreement

1. Parents/guardians are required to inform the Site Supervisor of the legal status of custody regarding their child and provide a copy of any existing Court Order at the time of admissions into the child care program, or as soon as there is a change in custody status.

2. Network's child care staff cannot deny a child's parent/guardian from picking up or seeing

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their child at the child care centre, unless there is a written Court Order on file at the child care program premises which prohibits this. Without a Court Order, both parents/guardians have the same right to pick-up and access their child at the child care premises.

Late Pick Up

1. Parents/guardians are asked to contact the child care program staff to advise the staff if they will be late in picking up their child at the end of the day.

2. Parents/guardians are required to have alternative pick-up arrangements in place, in the event of circumstances where a parent/guardian is unable to pick up their child by the time the child care program closes.

3. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up 6:10 p.m., the Site Supervisor, designate, or RECE shall contact the parent/guardian at all available phone numbers, leave messages and send a text message to advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.

    a. Where the child care staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, child care staff must call the parent/guardian again, leave a message and send text message. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.

    b. If the child care program staff are not able to reach the child's parent/guardian by 6:30 p.m. the child care staff will attempt to reach the child's emergency contacts person that the parents/guardians previously listed on the Application and Emergency Information Form.

4. As a last resort, child care program staff are required to contact a local Children's Aid Society to report any child who has not been picked up, or whose parent/guardian has not contacted the child care program staff by 7:30 p.m.

5. If repetitive late pick-ups occur, the Site Supervisor will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss and determine whether the centre hours meet the family's needs. If continued lateness is expected or continues, the Site Supervisor will support the family to explore alternate child care arrangements that are more suitable to the family's needs. A notice of withdrawal from care may be issued for unresolved patterns of lateness.

6. Network's Withdrawal of Services Policy (Policy #CCC-4.7) is followed in the event of continuous lateness in picking up the child at the end of the day.

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