

Absent and Missing Children (Vacation Care)

Policy Statement

We aim to ensure the safety and welfare of the children by ensuring clear communication and co-operation between the Service, parents and guardians.

Policy Considerations

- National Quality Standards/Elements: 2.2 (Safety), 6.1 (Supportive relationships with families)

Procedure

Absent Children

- Parents/guardians are to advise the Service if their child will be absent on a day when they are booked into care. Fees will be charged in accordance with the Fee Policy.
- Parents are requested to mark absences through the online booking calendar as early as possible or ring the Service and inform a staff member if their child will be absent. This information must be recorded on the roll.
- CCS will be paid for up to 42 initial absences per financial year. After these 42 absences parents can provide additional documentation to apply for additional absences.

Missing Children

If a child goes missing from the Service, staff will make every effort to locate the child without compromising staff supervision levels. The following procedure should be followed:

- All children will be gathered for a full roll call.
- A staff member will do a search of the outside premises while the other staff members stay inside with the children and search the inside premises. Likely hiding spaces (e.g. under tables, inside cupboards) should be checked.
- If the child is not found, the local police will be contacted. Upon arrival of the police, follow their directions.
- The child's parent/guardian is to be notified once the police have been contacted.
- Educators should keep the remainder of the group calm while this search takes place.
- The service Coordinator and Director are then to be contacted if not at the service.
- An incident report must be completed after the child has been found with measures on how this can be prevented in the future.

If a child goes missing while on excursion, staff will make every effort to locate the child without compromising staff supervision levels. The following procedure should be followed:

- All children will be gathered for a full roll call, where possible away from the public.
- A staff member will do a search of the area while the other staff members stay with the children. Educators should keep the remainder of the group calm while this search takes place.
- If the child is not found, the local police will be contacted. Upon arrival of the police, follow their directions.
- The child's parent/guardian is to be notified once the police have been contacted.

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- The service Coordinator and Director are then to be contacted if not on the excursion.
- The service Coordinator and Director will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether the remaining children will return to the service or stay at the excursion.
- An incident report must be completed after the child has been found with measures on how this can be prevented in the future.

Absconding Children

- If a child becomes distressed and or threatens to leave the service, an educator should stay with the child and use a mobile phone or walkie talkie to communicate with other educators.
- Keep calm and keep the child as calm and safe as possible (don't run). Try to stay between the child and possible exits to the service. Some children may need to be given space to calm down and should be encouraged to stay in a safe location.
- If the child chooses to leave the boundaries of the service, the educator should stay within the boundaries and watch out for the direction that the child takes. Educators should only leave the premises if there is an immediate risk to the child and leaving the premises does not compromise the safety of the remaining children.
- The Coordinator or other staff member would be advised and would make every effort to contact the parent or emergency contact listed for the child.
- If the parent is not contactable, the Police will be notified. Educators to give concise information regarding location and circumstances surrounding absconding child.
- An incident report must be completed after the child has returned to the service or been collected by their parent/guardian, with measures on how this can be prevented in the future.
- If the child has left the Service premises the incident must be reported to Children's Education and Care Assurance through NQAITS within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Document Version Control

Version Date	Changes
05/12/2018	Full review
27/08/2019	Document version history added
18/06/2020	Full review
20/05/2022	Procedure for absconding children added

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