



ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES POLICY (Early Years Services)

Introduction

The purposes of this policy are:

- To ensure the welfare and safety of children in the service.
- To ensure that children are received into the service safely and collected safely and that parents/guardians make direct contact with the appropriate staff members on arrival each day with their child.
- To encourage parents/guardians to pick up their children on time.
- To ensure that all children are collected from the service before the end of the last session.

And, where a child is not collected on time:

- To ensure where possible that the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified staff member who is known to the child.
- To support staff members in handling exceptional circumstances.

Policy Statement

To ensure that children are received safely into the service, parents/guardians must ensure that they make direct contact with an appropriate member of staff on arrival and pass on any information that is relevant to the child's care for the day/session.

On returning to collect their child, parents/guardians are encouraged to meet with their child's Key Person to be given information on how their child has been during the session/day and any on significant events/incidents involving/relevant to their child.

Parents/guardians must inform the service in person and/or in writing about who will be responsible for collecting their child. There is space allocated on the 'Registration Form' to name people other than parents/guardians who are authorised to collect a child.

The safety and welfare of the children will be our first consideration where parents/guardians fail to collect their children on time and all appropriate measures will be taken to support parents/guardians in ensuring that this does not happen.

Parents/guardians must inform the service in person and/or in writing of any changes to the planned collection of their child.

Children may only leave the service with authorised person/s.

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

A risk assessment of arrivals / collections security arrangements and practice is completed weekly.

Procedures & Practices

Arrival

- On arrival at the service parents/guardians must ensure that they make direct contact with an appropriate member of our colleague team and pass on any information that is relevant to the child's care for the day/session (See Key Person Policy and Transitions Policy).
- Colleagues sign child on Child Paths in real time

Collection

- Parents/guardians must state on the Registration Form the names of persons who are allowed to collect their child.
- Authorised persons must be over 18 years of age.
- Parents/guardians must notify the service personally (either verbally or in writing), if any other person is to collect their child on any given day.
- Colleagues will write in the day communication book of any changes of persons collecting a child for a given day.
- If there is no written record by a colleague or a parent/guardian as to alternative arrangements for collecting a child, nobody but the parent/guardian will be given access to the child.
- A colleague (usually the Key Person) will contact a parent if a discrepancy arises about the collection of children. All children must remain on the premises until parents/guardians have been notified.
- Parents/guardians are to present to member of our colleague team when collecting their child. A child must not leave the premises with a parent unless a colleague hands the child over and signs the child out. We appreciate parents' patience during this time.
- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to meet with their child's Key Person to be given information on how their child has been during the session/day and on any significant events/incidents involving/relevant to their child.
- Colleagues must ensure sufficient supervision during handover periods. Parents may be asked to wait a few minutes to ensure supervision requirements are met before engaging in handover.
- Children must be signed out by colleague who handed child over to the parent immediately i.e., in real time.

If A Child Is Not Collected

Parents/Guardians must inform the Manager of their service if they are unable to collect their child as planned. We will inform parents/guardians of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

We will also inform parents/guardians that if their children are not collected from the service by an authorised adult, the staff are unable to contact the parent/guardian, or colleagues can no longer supervise the child on our premises, we apply our Child Protection Procedures as set out in our Child Protection Policy.

In this event, we will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care to cause as little distress as possible.

In cases where we have not been contacted before collection time by a parent/guardian;

- A colleague will contact a parent/guardian as soon as possible.
- Colleagues will ensure that the child is cared for until the situation is resolved.

In cases where a child has not been picked up at close to normal time, or prior to 6:30pm;

- Two colleagues are to remain at the service with the child.
- Parents/guardians are contacted using the information provided on the Child Paths to establish a time for collection.
- If unsuccessful in contacting a parent/guardian, two colleagues must remain at the service and contact the service manager.
- After 15 to 30 minutes, the colleagues will choose the best-suited option;
 - Remain at the Centre – continuing to try to contact parent/guardian.
 - Ring emergency number and after consultation with them, arrange for the child/ren to become the responsibility of emergency contact.

Colleagues will not;

- Allow the child to leave with any person not nominated by parents/guardians except (name of designated person).
- Under any circumstances go to look for the parent or to take the child home with them.

A full written report of the incident is to be recorded.

In the event of late collection of a child/ren;

- Colleagues must ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of session ending times and ask them for their co-operation.
- A fee of €10 per minute or part thereof is charged until such time as the child is collected.
- Consistent lateness of parents/guardians may result in Tigers Childcare terminating childcare service with the family.

If the problem continues, staff will:

- Discuss with the parents/guardians whether they are experiencing particular difficulties in arriving on time.
- Determine whether there are any underlying factors including stress on the family.
- Offer to contact a support person such as a Social Worker to offer support to the family if stress is a concern.
- Enforce the €10 per minute late fee, to help cover cost of colleague costs and to encourage parents/guardians to collect children on time.

Repeated failure to collect a child can be an indicator of neglect or of extreme family pressure requiring additional support.

Parents who arrive to collect children in an 'unfit state'

Occasionally a parent collecting a child may arrive in an 'unfit state' due to illness or drug or alcohol consumption. Where the condition is severe, it may be quite distressing for staff members who will have concerns for the child/ren's well-being.

Our colleagues have no legal rights to withhold a child from a parent in these circumstances. However, the following measures may be adopted where appropriate:

- Attempt to calm the parent before he or she leaves with the child, e.g. invite him/her to sit down for a cup of coffee and talk with a staff member.
- Offer to contact a family member or friend, or the person(s) listed as the child's emergency contact on their registration form.
- Offer to call a taxi.

If the parent rejects the above suggestions and insists on taking the child, there is no legal recourse open to our colleagues. However, if they feel that the well-being of the child is at risk they have a duty to act as outlined in (Our Duty of Care: the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people), Department of Health and Children, 2002): **'It is important to always put the child's safety and well-being first, over and above any other considerations.'**

It is, therefore, always the policy of the service that 'the welfare of the child is the most important consideration'.

For that reason, where there is a risk to the child it is in the best interest of the child for colleagues to contact their local Duty Social Worker to discuss their concerns or, in case of emergency, contact the Gardaí.

Communication Plan

A copy of all policies will be available during hours of operation to colleagues and parents/guardians in the Policy Folder located in Tigers Childcare.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/guardians and colleagues will receive written notification of any updates via emails and/or Child Paths.

Related/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation

- Child Protection Policy
- Key Worker & Transitions Policy
- Collections & Transport Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Supervision Policy

References

Our Duty of Care: the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://health.gov.ie/blog/publications/our-duty-to-care-the-principles-of-good-practice-for-the-protection-of-children-and-young-people/>



Policy Review

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