

### **3.8 Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures**

Date Policy and Procedures Established: December 22, 2023

Date Policy and Procedure Updated: January 2, 2024, January 25, 2024, February 7, 2024

#### **Purpose**

This policy and the procedures within will help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers 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 as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for the policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

#### **Policy**

##### **General**

- Growing Together Family Resource Centre will ensure that any child receiving care at the Child Care Centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization to Growing Together stating they are approved to pick up the child.
- Growing Together Family Resource Centre will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual as stated above. Growing Together will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

#### **Procedure**

##### **Accepting a Child into Care**

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

- Greet the parent/guardian and child.
- Ask the 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 child's emergency or where

the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (i.e. note or email).

- As applicable, document any change in pick-up procedures in the daily classroom communication binder.
- Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

## **Where a child has not arrived in care as expected**

1. Where a child does not arrive at the Child Care Centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (i.e. left a voice message, sent an email or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
  - Inform the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor of the child's absence.
  - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the child's parent/guardian by phone within 3 hours of the child's scheduled start time. In the event the parent/guardian does not answer their phone, a voice message will be left and an email will also be sent asking for confirmation from the parent that their child is safe. If the parent/guardian does not respond and there is another parent/guardian listed, they will be to contacted as stated above. In the event the parent/guardian does not respond to the phone call or email within 10 minutes, the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will begin calling emergency contacts as listed on the child's emergency sheet until confirmation has been received by an authorized adult that the child is safe.
  - In the event confirmation has not been received within 1 hour of the initial phone call to the parent/guardian and all contacts for the child have been called with no confirmation by an authorized adult that the child is safe, the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the police to investigate. Growing Together will follow the directions of the police regarding next steps.
2. In the event a child arrives unscheduled to a Growing Together after school program including FDK, the following steps will occur:
  - The classroom educator will sign the child in the attendance log and include the child in ratio until the situation is resolved.
  - The classroom educator will contact the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor to investigate the child's schedule.
  - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the parent/guardian by phone to confirm the child's schedule. If the parent/guardian does not answer their phone, a voice message will be left stating the child is in our care and requesting the parent/guardian to contact the Child Care Centre. An email will then be sent to the parent/guardian to contact the Child Care Centre.
3. In the event a child does not arrive to a Growing Together after school program including FDK, the following steps will occur:
  - The classroom educator will contact the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor.
  - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the school office to see if the child was in-attendance at school.

- The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the parent/guardian to clarify the information that was received by the school is correct.
  - If the child was at school and is missing, the supervisor or acting supervisor will work with the school to locate the child. The bus company will be contacted if the child is suspected of boarding a school bus when not scheduled to. The Child Care Director will be contacted. If the child is not found within 20 minutes of school being released, the police will be contacted to investigate. Growing Together will follow the direction of the police regarding next steps.
4. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information regarding the child's absence in the daily communication binder.

### **Releasing a child from care**

1. 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) the staff will:
  - Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian or an authorized individual.
  - Where the above is not possible, ask the individual for photo identification. Confirm the individual's information as a parent/guardian or authorized individual on the child's emergency sheet or written authorization.

### **Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before Centre closes)**

1. When a parent/guardian does not pick up their child within 30 minutes of the scheduled end time that they have submitted, the staff in the classroom will contact the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor. The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the child's parent/guardian by phone and advise them that the child is still in care and has not been picked up. If the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor are not present, the classroom staff will contact the parent/guardian.
  - If the parent/guardian does not answer the phone, a message will be left. If another parent/guardian is listed, they will be contacted by phone and a message will be left if they do not answer. A second phone call will be made to the parent/guardian. In the event the parent/guardian can not be reached, phone calls will be made to the authorized individuals listed on the child's emergency sheet.
  - Where the individual scheduled to pick up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff will contact them by phone to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the Centre.
  - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was scheduled to pick-up the child, the staff will continue to call the

parent/guardian and authorized individuals until the Centre closes. Once the Centre closes, the staff will refer to the procedures under “Where a child has not been picked up and the Centre is closed.”

### **Where a child has not been picked up and the Centre is closed**

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was scheduled to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6:00pm, the staff will provide an activity to the child while they await pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the event the person picking up the child is an authorized individual; the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff will call the other authorized individuals on the child’s emergency sheet.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child’s emergency sheet by 6:15pm, the staff will call their Centre supervisor or acting supervisor. The staff will then proceed with contacting the local Children’s Aid Society (CAS) through Linck at (519)352-0440. The staff will follow the directions given by CAS in respect to next steps.

### **Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures**

Growing Together staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized individual. Under no circumstance will children be released from care to walk home alone.

### **Additional Procedures**

In the event a parent/guardian requests to have a Minor-child under 16 years of age, listed as an authorized individual for pick-up, the following must occur:

- The supervisor and parent/guardian must come to an agreement and the details of the agreement must be documented in the child’s file in the section that lists the person(s) authorized to pick-up. The decision will be made on an individual basis.
- The parent/guardian must complete a Growing Together “Picking Child up from Child Care Consent Form for Minors.” The completed form will be signed by the parent/guardian and the Centre supervisor and stored in the child’s personal file.

### **Glossary**

***Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual***-a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care staff in writing that is able to pick-up their child from care.

**Licensee**-The individual or corporation named on the License issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the Child Care Centre.

**Parent/guardian**-A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.

**Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15**

**Safe arrival and dismissal policy**

**50. Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has a policy respecting the safe arrival and dismissal of children that,**

- (a) provides that a child may only be released from the child care centre or home child care premises,**
  - (i) to individuals indicated by a child's parent, or**
  - (ii) in accordance with written permission from a child's parent to release the child from the program at a specified time without supervision; and**
- (b) sets out the steps that must be taken if,**
  - (i) a child does not arrive as expected at the centre or home child care premises, or**
  - (ii) a child is not picked up as expected from the centre or home child care premises.**