

LARRAKEYAH PRIMARY SCHOOL OSHC

ABSENT AND MISSING CHILDREN POLICY

Policy Statement

We will ensure the safety and welfare of the children by ensuring clear communication and cooperation between the Centre, parents and the school. Children who are missing or absent without notice will be treated with extreme seriousness until educators are assured of their wellbeing.

Procedure

Absent Children Parents/guardians are to advise the Centre if their child will be absent for a session that they are booked into care, whether it be a permanent or casual booking.

If parents are aware of a future absence, they must notify the service regarding the required absent days. If parents do not know until the day, they must notify the Centre of their child's absence prior to the end of the school day (2:45pm). Parents/guardians must indicate the expected end date of an absence and also advise of this change. Parents/guardians will be informed of this requirement upon enrolment.

Prior to the afternoon roll call, service management will compare attendance data with that of SAMS (School Management Solutions). Students that have been absent for the day or have been sent home sick will be marked absent.


Absent Children

If a child is not present at the Centre by 3:00pm, and the Centre has not been notified of their absence, the educator will:

- Ask other children of their knowledge of where the child might be.
- Inspect school grounds, ensuring all other children are well supervised during this time.
- Use the schools PA system to ask the child to return to OSHC.
- Contact the parent to clarify whether the child was collected from school.
- Contact the school office and/or class teacher to ask for information regarding the child's attendance at school and possible collection of the child from the school grounds.

If the whereabouts of the child is not known, and the child cannot be found on school grounds the educator will then telephone the parents/guardians again.

Upon making contact, if the child is absent that afternoon, the parents/guardians will be informed of their failure to advise the Centre of the child's absence and of any charges that may apply such as a Non-notification Fee (Fee Policy). Session fees will apply for all bookings, casual or permanent, where educators have not been informed of an absence. An educator will also ascertain the next expected session that the child will attend.



If contact cannot be made with the parents/guardians, or the parents/guardians believe the child should be at the centre then the educator will:

- Inform the school of the missing child
- Continue to search the school grounds with school staff assistance, ensuring that all the other children are well supervised during this time.

If the child is found, the educator is to ensure that all persons attempting to locate the children are informed. In addition, the parents/guardians should be contacted to advise the child has been located and an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record is to be completed. This will require a signature by the parents/guardians on collection of the child.

If the child is still not found then the educator will:

- Contact the families' authorised nominees.
- Continue to keep in contact with the school.
- Contact the Sub Committee to inform them of the situation.

If the child's location cannot be confirmed by 3:45pm then the educator will:

- Contact the Police.
- Advise the parents/authorised persons that the police have been phoned.
- Advise the Sub Committee that the Police have been phoned.

Where the police are called, the Responsible Person on Duty will complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record and report this incident to the Department of Education (Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate) using the NQAITS. In the event of repeat absences without notification, a formal letter from the Sub Committee, detailing the failure to notify the Centre of absence, will be delivered to the parent/guardian. Further issues may result in suspension of services.

The Director will ensure that all educators are aware of the policies and procedures relating to a missing child and will display the steps needing to be taken in their absence.

Absconding/ Missing Child

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure throughout each shift that educators are positioned to adequately supervise children in care as per the Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy.

If a child absconds or is missing the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person on duty is to be notified immediately, who should contact the parents and inform them of the situation. The Centre should ensure they maintain constant communication with parents and update them on the situation.

Educators should never chase a child as this could encourage the child to panic and run without looking for dangers around them, such as traffic.

An educator should stand in a position where they are able to see the child is safe without following or leaving the premises (i.e., at the gate looking down the street where the child may go).

If the educator loses vision of the child, or believe they will lose vision, or the situation appear to be escalating the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person on Duty are to contact the local police and advise them of the situation immediately.

If not already aware, the Nominated Supervisor and Sub Committee must be contacted.

An incident report is to be completed and submitted via NQAITS.

In the case of a reportable allegation against an educator a 7-Day notification form will need to be submitted to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard
- Family Law Act 1975
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- My Time, Our Place Framework for School Age Care in Australia

Endorsed:

Review date: