

D-26 Absconding

National Quality Standards (NQS)

2.2	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Reg. 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
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My Time, Our Place

1.1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported
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Policy Statement

This policy ensures the safety and wellbeing of all children and staff whilst taking all care in minimizing risk to the absconding child, other children, and staff.

Related Policies

- Daily Routines Policy
- Emergency Procedures Policy
- Facility Management and Security Policy
- Determining the Responsible Person Policy
- Indoor and Outdoor Environment Policy
- Maintenance of Records Policy
- Management of Incident, Injury and Trauma
- Relief Staff Policy
- Role of Management Committee Policy
- Staff Orientation and Induction Policy
- Volunteers / Students / Visitors Policy

Procedure

When a child has absconded

- If a child becomes distressed and threatens to leave the service, a staff member (other than the Responsible Person) would pursue the child using a mobile telephone to communicate with other staff.
- Keep calm and keep the child as calm and safe as possible (don't run).
- If the child chooses to leave the boundaries of the service, the staff member would stay within the boundaries and watch out for the direction that the child takes.
- 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 (Ryde Police: 9808 7401, or 000). Staff to give concise information regarding location and circumstances surrounding absconding child.
- The Director and staff at the service will document the incident on an incident report.
- The child, staff and parents will be counselled regarding the incident and strategies agreed upon to ensure that the incident does not recur.
- An absconded child is defined as a Serious Incident in relation to the National Quality Framework and must be reported to the Education and Care Unit within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Missing Child

- Roll call will be taken at the service as soon as practically possible after school finishes and as soon as children arrive at the service. Children will be encouraged to move swiftly to the service as soon as school finishes.
- If a child is absent at roll call, staff will firstly try to ascertain from school staff if the child was at school that day or if they are aware of the whereabouts of the child.
- If the whereabouts of the child is known but the child insists that they are being picked up early by a family member or friend, the Responsible Person in Charge will contact the parents or emergency contact person to confirm arrangements. All efforts will be made for the child to join the rest of the group until the situation has been clarified. This may include the child talking to the parents to verify information. The child in question should be closely supervised by a staff member until the issue is resolved.
- If the whereabouts of the child cannot be verified, the coordinator will contact the parents or emergency contact person, whilst another staff member searches the most likely route between the child's classroom and the service.
- Should the child remain missing, the Police will be notified by the Responsible Person (Ryde Police: 9808 7401, or 000).
- The Director and staff at the service will document the incident on an incident report.
- The child, staff and parents will be counselled regarding the incident and strategies agreed upon to ensure that the incident does not recur.

- A missing child is defined as a Serious Incident in relation to the National Quality Framework and must be reported to the Education and Care Unit within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Framework for School Age Care in Australia – My Time, Our Place
- National Quality Standard – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
- Network of Community Activities – Work Health and Safety Sample Policy
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Date Endorsed: 12/03/2023

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Version Control			
Version	Changes Made	Initiated By	Director Sign-off
v.2.202303	- No changes made		
v.2.202206	- Updated MTOP - Updated Related Policies - Updated Sources	Staff	
v.1.202206	- Update some wording		
v.1.201906	- Policy updated for new template	Staff	