



Policies and Procedures

Delivery & Collection of Children

Acacia's staff will act "in-loco parent/guardians" to children in their care. Each child must be formally accepted into the care of the staff and collected from them to ensure appropriate responsibility is taken for their care and safety.

When entering or leaving the Centre only the main door is to be used. The side gates are for emergency use only. All users are to make sure that the front door is securely closed. The front door must be closed to ensure it is locked (from the outside only) each time parent/guardians enter or leave the Centre, for the protection of all children.

The child's arrival time and expected departure time is to be recorded on the daily Attendance Record.

Acacia Children's Centre – Richmond is open from 7.30am to 6.00pm. Monday to Friday

Acacia Fitzroy Crèche is open from 7.30am to 6.00pm. Monday to Friday

Acacia Children's Centre St Albans is open from 6:30am to 6.15pm. Monday to Friday

We request that all children arrive by 10.00am. If parent/guardians have an important appointment and need to come late, they should advise the Centre of the delay by 9.30am. This gives children a chance to settle in and participate in the morning program.

Daily Attendance Record

This record is to comply with The Educational and Care Services National Regulations 2018.

Parent/guardians or the Authorised nominee must sign their child into the daily attendance record and enter the time whenever they leave or pick up their child from the Centre.

On arrival, the child must be placed in the care of an Educator. We encourage families to use this time to inform any changes in the child's health, behaviour or routine.

When collecting their child, Educators will inform the family about their child's day. Information about educational participation, meals, sleep/rest and toileting can also be viewed on various information tools (see individual rooms on where to find this information). Parent/guardians must ensure that educators are aware that they are taking their child from the Centre.

During an emergency evacuation, the attendance record will be used to check which children are present. If parent/guardians have not signed their child in, the child may be accidentally left in the building, or if the child has not been signed out, staff/educators risk their own lives trying to locate a child who has already gone home.

Release of Children

If parent/guardians arrange for someone different (authorised nominees in child's enrolment form) to collect a child for any particular day the arrangements must be clearly understood by the Room Leader or the Centre Director.



Parental consent is required for other people to collect a child from the Centre on a parents behalf. The people parents have authorised to collect their child must be specified in the child's enrolment form. This list may be added to or changed throughout the year. In the event that the child is not collected from the Centre and the parent/guardians or guardians cannot be contacted, this list will also be used to arrange someone to collect the child.

Children will only be released to Authorised Nominees. Children will not be released to minors (under 14 years of age).

If the person collecting the child is unknown to staff they will be required to wait while photo identification and authorisation is checked. If staff are unable to confirm authorisation the child will not be released to that person.

In the case of a parent/guardian arriving at the Centre by vehicle to collect their child in a visibly intoxicated or unfit state to drive the parent/guardian will be encouraged to:

- have the Centre call a taxi.
- contact an alternative adult to drive them and their child home

If the parent/guardian insists on driving their child, the police will be informed. (Where human life is at risk and the above cannot be complied with, the police will be immediately informed).

Emergency Contacts

There may be times when a child has an accident, injury, trauma or illness and parent or guardians cannot be contacted or are unable to collect their child due to your work commitments. To deal with these situations, the Centre requires at least 2 people, recorded in the child's enrolment form, who are authorised and available to collect and care for a child.

An emergency contact is an acknowledged person who, with the parent/guardian's authorisation, is allowed to give permission for the following:

- Authorise the taking of the child outside the service by an educator or staff member of the Centre;
- Consent to the child's medical treatment from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service;
- Request or permit the administration of medication to the child;
- Collect the child if necessary.

Custody or Access Arrangements

The Family Law Act 1975 states that both parent/guardians have equal rights and responsibilities as joint guardians of children. Otherwise, a court order, if issued by the Family Court or Supreme Court after a marriage breakdown, determines guardianship/custody and access issues.

In the absence of a court order, access cannot be denied to a parent/guardian, providing the parent/guardian is known to the Centre staff.

The following information needs to be considered when the custody and access to a child is in question at the Centre:

- A court order must be sighted and noted by the staff at the time of enrolment, or when issued by the Court if this occurs later. Staff should be provided with a list of people who may deliver or collect the child, with note of particular days if appropriate.



- Staff must request identification from a person unknown to them who demands access to a child. If appropriate, necessary court papers or authority must be sighted. If there is any doubt, the Centre will refuse access to the child until the situation is clarified with the custodial parent/guardian. If there is any doubt, access or custody will not be granted to the “unknown person”.
- If staff are put under threat by a person demanding a child, it is the Director or designated senior staff member’s responsibility to safeguard the welfare of staff and other children.
- If the Director is unable to resolve the dispute and believes the safest approach is to release the child, the Director must notify the person that the child in question is being released under duress and that the Police will be notified immediately. The custodial parent/guardian will also be advised immediately.
- Staff should avoid becoming involved in disputes and refrain from giving subjective personal views which are not able to be substantiated.
- While the best interests of children are paramount, staff have no obligations to be involved in custody cases, unless ordered to attend a Court hearing by being served with a subpoena. Further advice on these matters may be obtained from:
 - the Counsellor at the Family Court (where a case is likely to be heard), or
 - the Social Workers, Special Services (in all other cases).
- Where a court order exists preventing a parent/guardian from having access to their child except in a supervised situation, the Centre will not allow that visit to occur in its buildings or on its grounds.

Where parent/guardians envisage there could be difficulties with unauthorised persons wanting to collect their child the following details are required:

1. Bring the **original** court order/s for staff to see and a copy to attach to the child’s enrolment form;
2. If these orders:
 - a) Change the powers of a parent/guardian to:
 - authorise the taking of the child outside the service by a staff member of the service;
 - consent to the medical treatment of the child;
 - request or permit the administration of medication to the child;
 - collect the child from the service or family day care, AND/OR
 - b) Give these powers to someone else:

describe these changes and provide the contact details of any person given these powers.

The Director or certified supervisor placed in day-to-day charge will take responsibility for implementation of these procedures.

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

References

- Family Law Act 1975

