



SOUTHERN MONTESSORI ELC Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

Strategies and Practices

Authorised Persons

It is also paramount that children are delivered to and collected from the Centre by an **Authorised Person**.

An Authorised Person is a person who is a custodial parent or primary caregiver of the relevant child (regardless of whether that person has attained the age of 18 years). An Authorised Person can also be a person who:

- is over the age of 18 years; and
- is known to educators as a primary caregiver of the child; or
- is known to educators and/or is able to identify themselves as an emergency contact who is authorised to collect the child from and/or deliver the child to the Centre;
- has been authorised by the parent to collect their child.

Note that minors (being children under the age of 18 years), including siblings, will generally not be regarded as Authorised Persons. Children must not be collected or delivered to the Centre by minors, except in circumstances where a custodial parent or primary caregiver has made specific written notification to the Centre to this effect.

Upon enrolment, Authorised Persons are nominated in writing by the custodial parent or primary caregiver. Parents or caregivers are required to review and if necessary update a Family Information Form at the beginning of every academic year.

In the case of there being any change to the Authorised Person who is to collect the child, the Centre's Nominated supervisor/ teachers must be provided with written authorisation from the custodial parent or primary caregiver. Such authorisation must include:

- the name of child to be collected;
- the full name of the Authorised Person, and;
- their relationship with the child (for example, grandparent or family friend);
- their contact number.

This information is written into the Student Collection Record. Written authorisation must also be signed and dated by the relevant caregiver. In cases where verbal consent is given (for example, if a parent cannot collect the child in time) the above information must be recorded on the Student Collection Record, along with a note stating that the consent was verbal (for example, a telephone call).

In the case of an Authorised Person who is not known to the educators, that person must produce photographic identification to prove their identity (for example, passport or driver's licence). The educator sighting the identification must make a note to this effect on the Student Collection Record.

If someone who is not an Authorised Person arrives to collect a child from the Centre, educators will contact the custodial parent/caregiver to clarify the matter and to obtain authorisation. This is particularly necessary in circumstances where the Centre has not been notified of the collection arrangements. Educators will seek such authorisation from the custodial parent/caregiver before releasing the child, although in some limited and extreme circumstances this may not be possible. In such circumstances the person in charge should take all reasonable steps to clarify the matter and document those steps.

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The child must not be released until the Nominated Supervisor (or the person who is in charge of the Centre at the relevant time) is satisfied of the caregiver's consent, and of the non-Authorised Person's identity.

Sign in and Sign out Procedure

On arrival at the Centre the authorised person bringing or collecting the child must sign /initial the child's time of arrival and departure on the attendance sheet located by the front door. It is a mandatory legal requirement that all children in the Centre's care are to be signed in upon arrival at the Centre and signed out before leaving the Centre.

Educators can assist with this process if required and in any event must take all reasonable steps to ensure that this procedure is performed at each point of delivery and collection for each child. Accurate attendance records will be kept and checked throughout the day.

The Authorised Person must ensure that an educator is informed of the child's arrival and departure from the Centre. The Authorised Person must take care to ensure that gates are properly closed when entering and leaving the Centre, so as to ensure the safety of the other children at the Centre. The Authorised Person must not allow any child other than their own or children in their immediate care to pass outside of the gate.

Absences

From time to time, children are absent due to illness or unavoidable commitments. It is of great assistance if caregivers are able to notify the Centre that the child will be absent. Educators can record the absence in their sign in/sign out sheets.

Custody and Access

It is necessary for the Centre to clarify custody and access arrangements in respect of relevant children so that every child is safely handed over to a clearly identified Authorised Person. Where a child's parents are estranged, but there is no custody or access order in place, the Centre cannot refuse to hand over the child to a non-custodial parent, if that parent satisfies all of the requirements of being an Authorised Person. **It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to ensure that there are adequate orders in place and the Centre will not accept any liability in circumstances where there are no orders in place.**

Upon enrolment, the custodial parent must produce a copy of any Family Court custody or access order relating to that child. A copy of the order must be kept on the child's file, and all relevant educators must be informed of the contents of the order. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to keep the Centre informed of any amendments to the order and/or any superseding orders.

Where there are orders, educators must not allow a child to be collected except in accordance with those orders.

In the case of an estranged parent (who is not the custodial parent or an Authorised Person) arriving at the Centre and attempting to collect the child, educators must:

- seek photographic identification from the person to confirm that s/he is the child's parent (in cases where the person is not known to the educators);

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- advise the person that the child can only be released with the consent of the custodial parent (such consent must be produced on each occasion that a request to remove the child is made);
- contact the custodial parent to advise of the matter and to seek consent if the non-custodial parent insists on removing the child. If the custodial parent consents, such consent **must** be in writing, and must be in accordance with the terms of the order. If the custodial parent does not consent, the non-custodial parent must be informed of this and be asked to leave the Centre immediately;
- carefully document all aspects of the incident and such documentation must be kept on the child's file.

Under no circumstances will an educator act in contravention of a Custody or Access Order.

If the non-custodial parent refuses to leave the Centre, becomes abusive or aggressive and/or insists on removing the child in contravention of the order, the police should be called immediately by dialling **000**. The primary responsibility is to safeguard the interests and welfare of the children and educators at the Centre. In order to do so, it may be necessary to move children away from the non-custodial parent. The Centre's emergency and evacuation procedures should be employed for this. For further information, please refer to the Centre's *Emergency Policy*.

At all times, an educator should remain with the child who is the subject of the order. At no time should the child, or any other child, be left alone with the non-custodial parent. All educators who witness or who are involved in the incident should document what they saw, said, did and/or heard as soon as possible after the incident.

The custodial parent must be informed of the incident as soon as possible.

Depending on the seriousness of the incident, it may be necessary to bar the non-custodial parent from subsequently entering the Centre. The Centre will liaise with the police and may also seek legal advice in making such a determination.

Late Collection

The Centre's operating hours are from 9.00am – 3.15pm Monday to Friday (and closed on Public Holidays). The Centre reasonably expects that all children are collected by an Authorised Person and have left the Centre no later than 3.30pm. Children who attend the morning session only should have left the Centre no later than 12pm. However the Centre recognises that in rare and extreme circumstances an Authorised Person may be late or may be unable to collect the child.

In such circumstances:

- The Authorised Person must contact the Centre as soon as possible to advise that they will be late, to give an estimated time of collection, and/or to arrange for an alternative Authorised Person to collect the child.
- Where there has been no contact from the Authorised Person responsible for the collection of the child, an educator must attempt to contact an Authorised Person (Emergency Contact) as nominated on the child's enrolment form, and request them to collect the child immediately.
- Such Authorised Person must follow the sign out procedure as outlined above.
- Educators must stay at the Centre and continue to provide care for the child until the child is collected.
- Following collection, educators contact the caregiver, advising the caregiver of who has collected the child.
- Educators must document the matter in detail on the child's file.

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Where no Authorised Person can be contacted to arrange for collection of the child:

- Educators must continue to try and contact the caregiver.
- If, by 4pm there has been no contact and no one has arrived to collect the child, educators must contact Crisis Care, phone number **131 611** to arrange for the child to be taken into emergency care.
- Educators must stay at the Centre and continue to provide care for the child until the child is collected.
- If educators are unable to stay with the child, arrangements must be made for other educators to come to the Centre and care for the child until the child is collected.
- The Principal and Director must be informed of the situation as soon as possible.
- Educators must not transport the child in their own vehicles.
- Educators must document the matter in detail and retain this information on the child's file.

Persons Not in a Fit Condition to Collect Children

If an Authorised Person arrives to collect a child, and that person appears to be affected by drugs, alcohol, illness, and/or are behaving in an irrational and/or threatening manner, educators may hold reasonable concerns for the safety and welfare of the child in question. Accordingly, if in the opinion of educators the Authorised Person is not in a fit condition to collect the child, educators should:

- not leave the child alone with the Authorised Person;
- notify a Director or the person in charge, as soon as possible;
- settle the person in the office or classroom and offer them something to eat or drink if possible;
- attempt to calm the person by talking to them;
- attempt to contact the other Authorised Persons as nominated on the child's enrolment form;
- offer to call a taxi;
- contact the police if there is any threat of violence or if educators are concerned for the safety of the child or of any other child or adult at the Centre;
- contact the police for advice if there is any uncertainty about how to handle the matter;
- call **131 444 or 000** for advice if there is any uncertainty about the person's state of health;
- call **131 444 or 000** if the Authorised Person leaves with the child.

All educators involved in the incident must document all details, such as what the person said and did, as soon as possible after the incident. These details must be retained on the child's file.

Responsibilities of parents

- To complete the Attendance Record when delivering and collect their child/ren.
- To ensure the details of authorised nominees are complete, correct and current.
- To inform the authorised nominee(s) of the Centre's requirements (e.g. photo ID) when they collect a child.
- To inform the Centre immediately an access or custody order is put in place.
- To inform the Centre in the event of a family member contracting a communicable disease.

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Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy

Sources, further reading and useful websites

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard 2018

Policy review

- The Centre will review this Policy regularly.
- Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Centre to review this Policy.
- Educators are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be encouraged to be actively involved.

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL TABLE

Based on the Legal Liabilities Guidelines 2011

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
0.01	Oct 2012	Board of Governors	Creation of original document
0.02	Feb 2019	Board of Governors	Review of Policy Ratified

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