



Region of Waterloo

## Home Child Care Policies and Procedures

**Section:** Contracting with Home Child Care

**Policy No:** 4561736

**Policy Title:** Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

**Revision Date:** March 21, 2024

**Authority:** Region of Waterloo

**Policy Statement:** This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of all children receiving care.

**Policy Intent:** This policy will provide caregivers, agency staff (e.g., Consultant, Program Assistant, Supervisors, etc.), students and volunteers with a clear direction as to what steps are to be taken when a private child or Regionally referred child does not arrive at the home child care premises as expected, as well as procedures to follow to ensure the safe arrival and dismissal of all children.

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

### **Definitions:**

*Caregiver:* The person in charge of the children in a premises where home child care is provided.

*Emergency Contact / Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual:* a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care program staff in writing can pick-up their child from care.

*Home Child Care Consultant:* An employee of the home child care agency who will provide support at and monitor each premises and will be responsible to the licensee.

*Licensee:* The individual or corporation named on the license issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the home child care agency.

*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.

*Private child(ren):* A child where the Caregiver has a private contract with a parent to care for the child and collects parent fees directly from the parent. The parents do not contract directly with the Region nor is the child referred to the Caregiver by the Region.



Region of Waterloo

## Home Child Care Policies and Procedures

*Program Assistant:* An employee of the home child care agency who will provide support to the agency staff and Caregivers.

*Regionally referred child(ren):* A child directly referred to the Caregiver by the Region and where the Region pays the Caregiver directly for the home child care service. The Region contracts directly with the parent for a Region referred child.

*Supervisor:* An employee of the home child care agency who will provide support to agency staff and Caregivers including outside of regular business hours.

### **Procedures:**

#### Accepting a child into care

The Caregiver is responsible for signing children into the daily log book as children arrive at the home premises where care is provided.

The Caregiver is responsible for ensuring any communication from parents/guardians related to drop-off or absences is noted in the daily log book and the attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. Where a child does not arrive at the home child care premises and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off or that the child will be absent (e.g., left a voice message or advised the Caregiver at pick-up) the Caregiver must:
  - Contact the child's parent/guardian no later than 30 minutes after the child's anticipated arrival. Caregivers shall contact the child's parent/guardian(s) by telephone call, text message or email at least once and must make contact with an adult to confirm absence. If no response is received during a phone call attempt, caregivers must leave a voicemail if able.
  - If the Caregiver is not able to make contact with the parent/guardian(s) within 1 hour of the anticipated drop off time they are to follow up with the emergency contacts listed under the child's Application and Consent Form. The emergency contacts can either support trying to reach the parent/guardian(s) and/or confirming the absence.
2. If the caregiver is still not successful in confirming a child's absence then they need to follow the following steps depending on if it is a private child or Regionally referred child:
  - For private child(ren): If the Caregiver has not heard back from a parent/guardian or any emergency contacts by 1.5 hours of the anticipated drop off time they will contact the non-emergency Waterloo Regional Police service line to request a wellness check: 519-570-9777.

## Home Child Care Policies and Procedures

- Outside of office hours (Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm) For Regionally referred child(ren): If you have not heard back from a parent/guardian or any emergency contacts by 1.5 hours of the anticipated drop off time they will contact the non-emergency Waterloo Regional Police service line to request a wellness check: 519-570-9777.

### Caregiver Script for Wellness check:

*Hello, my name is (provide name). I am a licensed caregiver with the Region of Waterloo Home Child Care program. I would like to request a wellness check as there is a child scheduled to be in care today and I have not heard from the family and the child has not showed up to care. They were anticipated to be in care 1.5 hours ago and the parent/guardian is not responding to any attempts to contact.*

*The parent's name and address is:*

*(Full name)*

*(Address)*

*Thank you.*

- During office hours (Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm) For Regionally referred child(ren): reach out to the home child care program staff to advise by calling 519-575-4400 and asking for Home Child Care.
  - The Program Assistant will continue to attempt to reach the parent/guardian(s) and emergency contacts by either telephone call, text or email and request a follow up to confirm if the child will be attending care and clarify the reason for absence if applicable.
  - If the Program Assistant is not able to make contact with the parent/guardian(s) within an hour and a half of the anticipated drop off time they will contact the non-emergency Waterloo Regional Police service line to request a wellness check: 519-570-9777.
  - The Program Assistant will notify the Consultant and Supervisor by email that a wellness check has been requested by including the caregiver, parent and child(ren)'s names.

### Program Assistant Script for Wellness check (or Caregiver Script if outside of regular office hours):

*Hello, my name is (provide name). I am calling from the Region of Waterloo Home Child Care program. I would like to request a wellness check as there is a child scheduled to be in care today and we have not heard from the family and the child has not showed up to care. They were anticipated to be in care 1.5 hours ago and the parent/guardian is not responding to any attempts to contact.*

*The parent's name and address is:*



## Home Child Care Policies and Procedures

*(Full name)*

*(Address)*

*Thank you.*

3. Once the child's absence has been confirmed with either the Caregiver, Program Assistant, Supervisor or Consultant, then the Caregiver shall document the child's absence on the daily log book and the attendance record. Any additional information about the child's absence should be recorded in the daily log book. The Caregiver must inform their consultant if they complete a wellness check for a private child or Regionally referred child (outside of office hours) and once contact has been made with parent/guardian. Whomever makes contact with the parent/guardian will provide a reminder of the requirement to notify the Caregiver if their child will be absent or sick on a regularly scheduled day of care.

### Releasing a child from care

The Caregiver shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or emergency contact that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization in the Application & Consent form that the child may be released to.

Where the Caregiver does not know the individual picking up the child, the Caregiver must ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the Application & Consent form or written authorization provided by parent/guardian. If the parent has not provided written authorization and/ or the individual has not provided identification, the child is not to be released.

### **Where a child has not been picked up as expected**

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived within 15 minutes of their scheduled pick up time, the Caregiver shall ensure that the child is given a snack (as needed) and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. The Caregiver shall contact the parent/guardian to review that the child is still in care and inquire about their anticipated pick-up time.
3. Where the Caregiver is unable to reach the parent/guardian, the Caregiver is to contact the emergency contact(s) listed on the Application & Consent form that the parent/guardian(s) have provided written authorization for their child to be released to.
4. Where the Caregiver is not able to make contact with the parent/guardian(s) or an authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the Regionally referred child:

The Caregiver shall contact their Consultant or covering staff.

**OR**



## Home Child Care Policies and Procedures

If this occurs for a Regionally referred child(ren) outside of office hours (Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm) or for a private child(ren) and the caregiver is either no longer available for care or within 1 hour of the agreed upon pick up time (whichever comes sooner) then the Caregiver shall proceed with contacting Family and Children's Services. Skip step 5 and see below.

5. Where the home child care agency staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the Regionally referred child's file (e.g., emergency contacts) by the time the Caregiver is no longer available for care or within 1 hour of the agreed upon pick up time (whichever comes sooner) the home child care agency staff shall proceed with contacting the local Family and Children's Services.

### Family and Children's Services

Kitchener/Waterloo: (519) 576-0540

Cambridge: 519-623-6970

The Caregiver or home child care agency staff shall follow Family and Children's Services direction with respect to next steps. For Regionally referred children the home child care agency staff will contact the Caregiver to confirm next steps.

### Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Where a parent/guardian has provided written and signed authorization for their child to be released from care without supervision, Caregiver must be responsible for dismissing the child from care. Prior to dismissing the child from care, the Caregiver shall review the written instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian in the Outdoor Play and Supervision Form or written authorization and release the child at the time set out in the instructions. The Caregiver shall document the time of departure from care in the daily log book.

### References / Appendix:

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.