

## Accidents, Serious Occurrences & Child Protection Issues

This section contains procedure for handling the following incidents. Please familiarize yourself with all of the procedures.

### Minor Accident

- What is a minor accident?
- What to do for a minor accident?

### Serious Occurrences

- What is a serious occurrence?
- What to do when a serious occurrence has happened in my home?
- Enhanced Serious Occurrence
- Serious Occurrence Notification Form

### Other Special Problems

- What other special problems may occur?

### Reporting a Child in Need of Protection

- What is my legal responsibility if I suspect a child has been abused or is in need of protection?
- What should I do if I suspect a child has been abused or in need of protection?

### Minor Accident

#### What is a Minor Accident?

A minor accident is any minor incident that affects the well being of the child in your care; i.e. basic first aid treatment is needed. If you are unsure whether to treat the incident as minor or serious, call the Home Child Care Consultant for your area.

Keep a first-aid manual and first-aid kit in an easily accessible location. Check the contents regularly to replenish it or replace out of date products. The first aid kit should be located in the space you do the most child care in.

#### What to do for a Minor Accident

- Use a common sense approach. Stay calm and follow the instructions below:
  - Take immediate first aid action to assist the child. Refer to your First Aid Manual or the [Red Cross First Aid & CPR Guide](#).

## The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual

- You cannot add any creams or ointments to the injury - **soap and water only**.
- Carefully watch the child for any after effects (i.e. drowsiness, change in skin color, eye dilation or other area of soreness).
- Notify the parent of the incident and of your actions.
- Notify the Home Child Care Consultant or Supervisor.
- Fill out the incident report form and give to your consultant or the Home Child Care office within 24 hours. See Record Keeping for sample form.

### Serious Occurrences

#### What is a Serious Occurrence (SO)?

- The death of a child who received child care at a home child care premise;
- Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a home child care premises;
- A life threatening-injury to or life-threatening illness of a child who receives care at a home child care premise;
- An incident where a child who receiving child care at a home child care premise goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or
- An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a home child care premises that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving care at the home child care premises.

#### What to do when a Serious Occurrence happens in your home

- Take immediate action to assist the child. Call 911 if you need assistance from police, ambulance, fire, or other emergency services.
- Make arrangements for emergency care for other children in your care – this must be an adult of 18yrs or older.
- Notify the parent.
- Notify Home Child Care Consultant, we will need the following information:
  - child's name
  - whether parents were contacted
  - nature of occurrence
  - time of occurrence
  - action taken
  - current status of child
  - any assistance you need
- Contact the school if an accident occurs to a child who is expected at school.

#### Next Steps

All Serious Occurrences which occur between 8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday – Friday, must be reported to Home Child Care **immediately**.

## The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual

If a serious occurrence happens **after office hours** or on weekends or holidays, you must call the “*Emergency Social Services*” phone number **immediately**.

**Social Services Emergency Phone Number: 519 575-4400**

If you need to report a serious occurrence after hours please say to the person who answers the phone “I am a Region of Waterloo Caregiver, and I need to report a serious occurrence and need to speak to a Home Child Care Supervisor”.

Make sure you give them your phone number where you can be reached.

The answering service will then contact either the Manager of Home Child Care, the Director of Children’s Services, or one of the Home Child Care Supervisors, who will call you right back.

They will need to ask you some questions about what happened and will also be able to offer you support and advice. An incident report form may be required, your consultant will assist you with this.

**Note:** If there is an inquiry into the incident, you will be required to give the necessary information. Home Child Care will assist you with this.

- If the serious occurrence is a fire, follow your Fire Evacuation Plan. (See Fire Safety).
- If the serious occurrence is abuse to a child while in your care, follow procedure for reporting of child abuse.

### **Serious Occurrence Notification Form**

- The safety and well-being of children in Home Child Care is our highest priority. The Ministry of Education requires that our Home Child Care locations post information about serious occurrences that happen in homes.
- In order to provide transparency and access to information, a “Serious Occurrence Notification Form” must be posted at the caregiver home in a visible area for 10 business days. Home Child Care is already required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education.
- The posting will give parents information about the incident, outline follow-up actions taken, and list outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved

## The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual

- Many factors lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that Home Child Care or the contracted home is not in compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the home.
  - Within 24 hours of becoming aware of an occurrence or when Home Child Care deems the occurrence to be serious as set out under MEDU 2009 **Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures**, the Home Child Care Consultant will complete the Serious Notification Form to communicate information to parents about the incident that has taken place in the home of the caregiver.
  - The Home Child Care Consultant will sign the form and will ensure that the caregiver posts the form in her home.
- The exception is in the case of allegations of abuse or unverified complaints, which will be posted at the completion of follow up/ investigation.

### Allegations of Abuse

Serious Occurrence Notification Forms pertaining to allegations of abuse are posted when the following have been concluded:

- Family and Children's Services has concluded its investigation and the allegation is either verified or not verified
- or
- Family & Children's Services has determined that an investigation will not be conducted and
  - The Ministry has investigated any associated licensing non-compliance

### Information to be included:

The description section will include information about whether Family & Children's Services conducted an investigation into the report and identify that the Ministry conducted an investigation into compliance with related licensing requirements, such as:

- Family & Children's Services verified the allegation;
- Family & Children's Services has not verified the allegation;
- Home Child Care has taken action on any other directions given by Family & Children's Services, if applicable;
- Home Child Care has addressed any associated licensing non-compliances identified by the Ministry, if applicable.

## The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual

- The Serious Occurrence Notification Form is updated by the Home Child Care Consultant as Home Child Care takes additional actions or investigations are completed.
- The Serious Occurrence Notification Form is posted for a **minimum of 10 business days**. If the form is updated with additional information such as additional actions taken by Home Child Care, the form remains posted for 10 days from the date of the update.
- Home Child Care will retain the Serious Occurrence Notification Form for at least two years from the date of the occurrence and make the forms available for current and prospective parents, licensing and municipal children's services staff upon request.

For the protection of privacy and personal information, no child or staff names, initials, or age/birth date of child are to be used on the Serious Occurrence Form.

### Other Special Problems

Caring for children is a challenging job. There may be occasions when a situation occurs that is out of the ordinary. In any situation where you have a concern about the safety or the welfare of the child, please call your Home Child Care Consultant for assistance. If the Consultant for your area is not available, please ask to speak to the supervisor or another staff person. If needed, someone from the office will come out to help you.

If a situation like this arises after office hours, contact the appropriate helping agency (i.e. Police, Hospital, Family & Children's Services) and inform Home Child Care as soon as possible. (See after hours reporting above)

Some examples of special problems could be:

- child who does not come from school
- child who exhibits strange behaviour
- child who is uncontrollable with you or with others in your home
- child who shows malicious behaviour toward animals
- child who is suspended from school
- child who becomes very ill while in your care
- animal bites (call the Home Child Care office for the Special Procedures for Reporting)

If any of these situations or other special problems occurs, do not hesitate to contact Home Child Care for assistance.

## Reporting a Child in Need of Protection

### What is my legal responsibility if I suspect a child has been abused or is in need of protection?

- As a Home Child Care Caregiver, it is your legal responsibility under Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 Section 125 to report any suspicions that you have that a child is in need of protection.
- Situations that must be reported to Family & Children's Services and what is considered child abuse can be found [here](#) and is further described at the end of this section.
- The "[duty to report](#)" is an ongoing obligation.
- If you have made one report and then have additional concern you must make another report to Family & Children's Services.

### What should I do if I suspect a child has been abused or is in need of protection?

- Ask the child what happened by using open ended questions. Keep notes of the answers.
- If appropriate, ask the parent what happened.
- Decide if this is a situation that you should report to Family and Children's Services.
- Inform the Home Child Care Consultant that you are going to make report. We can assist you with the gathering of information for your report.
- [Contact Intake Services at Family & Children's Services](#) at 519-576-0540 (Kitchener/Waterloo), 519-623-6970 (Cambridge).
- Tell the Intake worker that you want to report a concern that a child may be abused or in need of protection.
- Tell the Intake Worker that you are a Home Child Care Provider in the Region's Home Child Care Program

### Have Ready

- The Child's personal information (name, birth date, address)
- The parent's information (name, address)
- A clear description of your concern

### Be prepared

- For the Family & Children's Services worker to come to your home to talk to the child
- For the Family & Children's Services worker to ask you to observe the child and

# The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual

report back.

**The Home Child Care program will support you through this process**

**What is child abuse and how to recognize the signs**

[\(Source: Ontario's Association of Children's Aid\):](#)

**Child abuse** includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect. It also addresses a pattern of abuse and risks of harm.

(While a single sign listed below doesn't necessarily mean abuse or neglect is occurring, it can be an indication that something is wrong. If multiple signs are being exhibited, the child may be at risk of abuse or neglect.)

**Physical abuse** is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cuts, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse.

**Subtle signs of physical abuse may include (but are not limited to):**

- Child wears long sleeves/long pants even in warm weather
- Excessive crying
- Child seems anxious when other children cry
- Avoidance of physical contact with others
- Recurrent nightmares or disturbed sleep patterns
- Behaviour extremes—aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Poor self-concept
- Whispered speech
- Loss of appetite for no apparent reason, or excessive appetite
- Child is wary of adults
- Re-enactment of abuse using dolls, drawings or friends
- Clinging
- Delinquent behaviour
- Abrupt decline in school performance

**Neglect** occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused.

**Subtle signs of neglect may include (but are not limited to):**

- Missing key articles of clothing
- Over- or under-dressed for weather conditions

## The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual

- Height and weight significantly below age level
- Consistent school absenteeism
- Persistent hunger
- Trouble concentrating
- Low self-esteem
- Body odour
- Child assumes adult responsibilities
- Always being dirty and severely unkempt
- Sleepiness/always tired
- Child steals food/lunch money from others

**Emotional abuse** is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

### **Subtle signs of emotional abuse may include (but are not limited to):**

- Sudden change in self-confidence
- Headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
- Destructive behaviour
- Abnormal fears, increased nightmares
- Failure to gain weight (especially in infants)
- Desperately affectionate behaviour
- Speech disorders (stuttering, stammering)
- Habit disorders (biting, rocking, head-banging)
- Argumentative or consistent temper tantrums
- Bullying tactics
- Being easily frustrated
- Behaviour extremes—disobedient or overly compliant

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because he or she wants to please the adult or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, and allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution.

### **Subtle signs of sexual abuse may include (but are not limited to):**

- Frequent sore throats or urinary infections
- Constant sadness
- Re-enactment of abuse using dolls, drawings or friends
- Clinging
- Thumb-sucking



## **The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Resource Manual**

- Sudden fear of the dark
- Behaviour extremism—aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Recurrent nightmares or disturbed sleep patterns
- Loss of appetite for no apparent reason, or excessive appetite
- Bedwetting
- Avoidance of undressing or wearing extra layers of clothes
- Abrupt decline in school performance