



## **Guidance for Policy on Dropping off and Collection of Children for School Age Services**

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide School Age Services with the regulatory requirements for the specific policy on Drop off and Collection of Children, as set out by the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Registration of School Age Services \(2018\)](#). This document sets out the core requirements that should be addressed in this policy. Additionally, the prompts and considerations will support registered providers to ensure that their policy and procedures are fully developed and are reflected in the practices in their service.

The information in this document should be applied to the specific policy on the Drop off and Collection of Children and the accompanying procedures of the service. This document should read in conjunction with the [Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services](#), and the [National Quality Guidelines for School Age Child Care Services](#).

*This document is for reference only. It should not be assumed that the guidance provided is comprehensive or that it provides a definitive answer in every situation.*

*Note: this policy may overlap with the preschool policy on authorisation to collect children.*

Further resources are available in [Appendix 1](#).

## Regulatory Requirements for this policy

### **Child Care Act (1991) Registration of School Age Services Regulations (2018), Schedule 6 (e)**

A policy that describes the procedures carried out by the service to;

- Ensure the safety of the children arriving at and departing from the service,
- Including the policy in relation to persons authorised to collect the child from the service,
- Whether, and under what circumstances, children are permitted to leave the service unaccompanied.

## 2.0 Core policy requirements

A Policy Statement is recommended for this policy alongside the core requirements as set out further in this document. The policy statement should set out the service's commitment to having safe and appropriate procedures and practices in place to ensure that children are safeguarded at drop off and collection times.

### Requirement 1

The policy sets out the procedures for drop off and collection time of a School Age child to and/or from the service.

#### **Prompts and considerations** (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) How parent(s), guardians or nominated person(s) are informed of the drop off and collection procedures of the service.
- (b) The measures in place for the drop off to the service and collection of children from the service.
- (c) The measures to ensure that written authorisation from parents/guardians for another person to collect their child from the service are in place.
- (d) The procedures in place when a non-authorised person arrives to collect a child.

### Requirement 2

The policy sets out the procedures to be followed by staff in the service who are dropping off and/or collecting children from another location/service.

#### **Prompts and considerations** (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) How parent(s) or guardians are informed of the drop off and collection procedures of the service.
- (b) That specified written consent is required from the parent(s)/ guardian prior to the service collecting and/or dropping off the School Age child to and/or from a location.
- (c) The procedures to be followed when staff are dropping off and/or collecting school age children.
- (d) The methods of communication between the parent(s), guardians or nominated person(s) and the School Age Service in relation to the collection and drop off of children to another location, including when a child is absent from the other location on a specific day.
- (e) That a risk assessment is carried out and details safeguarding measures relevant to the age of the children and distance.
- (f) If the service will facilitate the drop off and collection of a child at an alternative location which is not the school which the child attends.

### Requirement 3

The policy on dropping off and collection of school age children sets out the procedures for unexpected circumstances.

#### **Prompts and considerations** (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) The actions of the service should a child not be present at the school for collection time. These procedures should also be detailed within the child safeguarding policy, and critical incident policy (where in place).
- (b) The procedures in the case of late and non-collection from the service by the parent, guardian and/or nominated person(s).
- (c) The procedures of the service when a parent or guardian or authorised person arrives in an unfit state to collect a child.

### Requirement 4

The policy on dropping off and collection of school age children specifies whether, and under what circumstances, children are permitted to leave the service unaccompanied.

#### **Prompts and considerations** (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) If the service permits children to leave the service unaccompanied and identifies the circumstances (if any) in which children are permitted to leave the service unaccompanied.
- (b) How a parent(s) or guardian makes a request to the service to permit their child to leave the service unaccompanied.
- (c) That the decision to permit a child to leave the service unaccompanied is at the discretion of the service, and without an agreement with parents/guardians, a child is not permitted to leave the service unaccompanied.
- (d) That the service carries out a risk assessment to determine reasonable measures are in place to safeguard the child's health, safety and welfare prior to permitting a child to leave the service unaccompanied.
- (e) How the service communicates the risk assessment with the parent(s) or guardian and the child.
- (f) That specified written consent is required from the parent(s) or guardian prior to a child leaving the service unaccompanied.
- (g) The safeguarding measures in place within the services Child Safeguarding Statement, to include: the procedures in place to safeguard the child/children leaving and/or returning to the service, responsibilities of staff, record keeping procedures, timeframes for the review of risk assessments, procedures in place in the event of an accident or incident and procedures in the event of an emergency.

### 3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing a Dropping off and Collections Policy

In addition to the regulatory requirements for this policy as set out in this document, service providers can enhance the quality of practice in the development and implementation of a Dropping off and Collections policy in the service. In this section, best practice in this policy area is outlined and further information is signposted where available.

#### **Drop off and collection [carried out by the service]**

- The procedures will differ for the drop off and the collection of children and should be distinguished within the policy. For example, at collection time, the policy could specify actions to follow prior to leaving the service including the signing out of staff, required documentation and/or equipment to include emergency contact details, attendance records and/or mobile phone.
- There could be consideration given to the procedure in the case where the child who is expected to attend the service does not arrive. This may include the person in charge determining if the child/young person is present in school, contacting the parent, guardian or nominated person. The policy should clearly set out the actions taken by the service where the location of the child/young person is unknown.
- The risk assessment should consider before, during and after the drop off and/or collection of children/young people. It should consider the age profile, number of children, distance and any other relevant factors.

#### **Drop off and collection of children and young people [carried out by the parent/guardian or authorised person]**

- It is good practice to set out the expectations for parents/guardian for drop off to the service. For example, if the child/ young person is accompanied to the services door.
- The service should consider if the child can arrive to the service unaccompanied. This practice is at the discretion of the service and should follow the prompts as outlined in [Requirement 4](#).

#### **Permitting Children and/or and young people to leave unaccompanied.**

- The service should consider if and how a parent or guardian can make a request to the service for their child/young person to leave unaccompanied, e.g. verbally or in writing. The parent/guardian request should detail the location the child is departing to, frequency and a proposed timeframe for the permission to be valid, if appropriate.

- The following factors should be considered before a service permits a child to leave unaccompanied:
  - Written consent from the school age child's parent and/or guardian is in place.
  - A discussion has taken place with the child/young person and the parent and/or guardian regarding the route(s) to travel, frequency/occurrence, agreed time for arrival to the service and/or another location, plan in the event of an emergency, where possible to include a method of communication.
  - The service should provide details on the procedures in place to safeguard the child/young person leaving and/or returning to the service, responsibilities of staff, record keeping procedures, timeframes for the review of risk assessments, procedures in place in the event of an accident or incident and procedures in the event of an emergency.

## 4.0 Appendix

### 4.1 Supporting Information

- Barnardos: [Working in Partnership with Parents](#)
- Barnardos: [Critical Incident Planning in Early Learning and School Age Services](#)
- Department of Children, Disability and Equality: [National Quality Guidelines for School Age Childcare Service's](#)
- National Child Safeguarding Programme: [Safeguarding for Early Learning and Child Care Services](#)
- Department of Children, Disability and Equality: [National Quality Guidelines for School Age Childcare Service's](#)
- Tusla Child and Family agency: [Safeguarding Statement](#)

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