



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## Absent and Missing Children Policy

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### 1. Introduction

The Manager Children's Services, Nominated Supervisors, Certified Supervisors and all Educators must ensure that children at the service are supervised at all times, having regard to the child's age, their physical and intellectual development and to the activities in which they are engaged.

### 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Children's Services operated by Coast Services General Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Coast Community Connections LTD) and to its employees. This applies to Early Childhood Programs, Occasional Care, Out of School Hours Care and to Vacation Care programs and services.

### 3. Policy

Educators and staff are required to maintain ratios and supervise children at all times. Operating a service that adheres to correct adult to child ratios will help minimise the risk of a child going missing.

### 4. Procedures and Implementation

In the event of a child who has gone missing the following steps for each service type are to be followed.

#### Occasional Care

- 4.1 At the end of each day all beds and all areas of the premises (both indoors and outdoors) are thoroughly checked by at least 2 members of the staff to ensure that no child remains on the premises after the service closes at the day of the day.
- 4.2 A check list of all areas of the building, is completed each day to ensure that the premises have been checked to ensure that no children are left behind.

#### In the event of a child going missing the Nominated Supervisor and staff will:

- 4.3 Continue to look for the missing child
- 4.4 Contact the Police on 000
- 4.5 Contact the Parents
- 4.6 Contact the Manager Children's Services.
- 4.7 Nominated Supervisor and other staff who may have been involved complete a serious incident report which is completed, **within 24 hours** on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority website using the NQA IT system portal.
- 4.8 Continue the investigation and provide further information to the Department of Education.
- 4.9 Facilitate a meeting with the parents regarding the incident
- 4.10 Provide the family with a letter regarding the findings of the investigation

### 5. OSHC Services

- 5.1 The parent must notify the OSHC service via a phone call, email or text message as soon as the parent is aware that the child is not attending. Where a child is

booked in for a session and the child is not present and the Service has not been notified the Educator will follow our procedures for a missing child.

**In this case the OSHC Nominated or Certified Supervisor or responsible person on duty will:**

5.2 Call school

5.3 Call parent/emergency contact

5.4 If the child's whereabouts cannot be determined the police will need to be called

5.5 If a parent fails to notify the service that their child will not be attending,

**1<sup>st</sup> No notification** - Verbally remind the parent/carer

**2<sup>nd</sup> No notification** - Email parent/carer and a phone call to notify the service

**3<sup>rd</sup> No notification** - Supervisor to escalate matters to Manager Children Services. Invite parent/carer to a meeting discuss the importance of notification and that a fee will be in place if no notification continues.

**4<sup>th</sup> No notification** –Parent/carer will be advised that the session that was booked will need to be paid e.g. Before school care non notified fee of \$2.00 will need to be paid.

## **6. Children for reasons of their own runaway from After School Care or Vacation Care.**

**In this case the OSHC Nominated Supervisor will:**

6.1 Contact parent/emergency contact

6.2 Contact police

6.3 Contact Manager Children Services

6.4 Nominated Supervisor involved to complete an incident report within 24 hours of the incident taking place and upload to the NQITS

6.5 Facilitate a meeting with the parents regarding the incident.

## **7. Children may wander off or get lost on an excursion. In this case the Nominated Supervisor will:**

7.1 Nominated Supervisor and the Educators to look for the child.

7.2 After searching the immediate environment Nominated Supervisor will call Police on 000

7.3 Nominated Supervisor is to contact parents and updates relay the procedure so far to the parent.

7.4 Once the child is located an incident report within 24 hours of the incident taking place and Department of Education.

7.5 Findings of the investigation are to be submitted to Manager children Services, CEO of Coast Community Connections. Continue to update DOE of any further information as it arises.

7.6 Nominated Supervisor and Manager Children Services, facilitate a meeting with the parents regarding the incident

7.7 Provide the family with a letter regarding the findings of the investigation.

7.8 Staff meeting to discuss how to minimise the risk in the future and continuous improvement.

**At all children's services mentioned above, The Manager Children Services will:**

- Support the Nominated Supervisor with the investigation process.
- Brief the CEO regarding the incident of the missing child and the outcome.
- Ensure that the investigation of the incident is concluded within 30 days.

## **Related policies and procedures**

Access to Children

Excursions and Travel

## **Forms and Records**

Serious Incident Report on the NQITS portal

Accident/illness/injury and trauma form