



HARMONY CHILDCARE CENTRE

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Name of Centre: HARMONY CHILDCARE CENTRE

Date Policy and Procedures Established: JANUARY 01, 2024

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: JANUARY 08, 2024

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at Harmony Childcare Centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

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

Note: Definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

POLICY

General:

- Harmony Childcare Centre staff will ensure that any child enrolled at Harmony Childcare Centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that Harmony CC may release the child to.
- Harmony Childcare Centre staff will only dismiss children (ages 2 to 9 years) into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. Harmony CC will not release any children from care without supervision.
- A parent/guardian may request that a child who is 10 years or older be released from Harmony CC without supervision. Parents/Guardians *must provide written and signed authorization and instructions* for the release of the child including the time of dismissal.
- Where a parent/guardian provides written instructions for the release of their child from care without supervision, the *parent/guardian is aware that the child care is no longer responsible for that child upon their dismissal.*
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

PROCEDURES

Accepting a child into care:

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
 - greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the "Authorized, Other people who may pick up the child from child care" (found in the Child's File) or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or e-mail).
 - document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily book (written record) both in the classroom and main office
 - sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected:

1. Where a child does not arrive at Harmony Childcare Centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message, sent an e-mail or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - inform the Staff Supervisor, Director or Head Teacher (in this order if one is absent) and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:00 am – reporting / accounting of absent children will begin at 9:30 am. Staff shall call child's parent/guardian. If calls go unanswered after 2 attempts and after a message has been left (within ½ hour timeframe), staff will send an email and/or text message to parent/guardian numbers on file.
 - Should none of the above attempts result in staff reaching a parent/guardian to confirm absence / delay in arrival, the Staff Supervisor or Director will reach out to the Emergency Contacts on file. Once all efforts mentioned above have been made and the centre is still unable to confirm absence *and extenuating circumstances call for immediate follow-up (extreme weather conditions, knowledge of issues at home, etc.)*, the Director will call the Police as a last resort.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the "Safe Arrival Policy Follow-Up" sheet and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.


Releasing a child from care:

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that Harmony Childcare Centre staff may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
 - confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - where the above is not possible, 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 child's file or written authorization.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes):

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not yet been picked up after ½ hour of the given time, the Staff Supervisor, Director or Head Teacher in the room shall contact the parent/guardian by phone and/or text (if one or other does not garner a response) and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must call again and leave a message if one was not left at the first attempt and send another text message. Staff Supervisor or Director may follow-up with an e-mail for the parent/guardian. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.
 - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall contact Emergency Contacts on file. If this is unsuccessful, staff will wait until program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed".

Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed:

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6:00 pm, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. If staff have not been notified of late pick-up, the staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact the Emergency Contacts found on the Child's Emergency Sheet and/or file.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 6:30 pm the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) 416-924-4646  Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures:

Children under 10 years:

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

Children 10 to 12 years old:

Where a parent/guardian has provided written authorization for their child to be released from care without supervision, one staff in the program must be responsible for dismissing the child from care. *Prior to* dismissing the child from care, the staff shall review the written instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian and release the child at the time set out in the instructions. The staff shall document the time of departure from care and as well as their initials on the attendance record.

Instructions for release must:

- come from the parent / guardian cell number on file (text) or by e-mail on file – which *must follow a telephone conversation* with the parent / guardian that they are requesting their child be released from care without supervision (an adult)

- Include child's name and time of release from care, "I _____, parent / guardian of _____, authorize Harmony Childcare Centre to release my child(ren) from care without supervision. _____ can leave at ____ pm to walk home on their own. I am aware that Harmony is *no longer responsible for my child(ren) upon their dismissal.*"

GLOSSARY

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.

Licensee:

The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre and home child 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.

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 premise

