



2.19 LOST OR MISSING CHILDREN

Purpose Statement

Windermere Family Day Care has a duty of care to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times whilst maintaining their safety and wellbeing. Educators are committed to:

- ensuring that the physical environment in which the care takes place is secure and supportive of a child's needs, and;
- providing adequate supervision to safeguard against the possibility of children getting lost or going missing.

Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), Educators, children and families, students, volunteers and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

Definitions

Adequate supervision: means an Educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation, knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.

CSS: Child Safe Standards.

Direct supervision: requires focused attention and intentional observation at all times. Being alert and aware of risks, hazards and the potential for accidents throughout the service is critical to active supervision. For active supervision to be effective, Educators must be conscious of the physical environment and be attuned to the needs of individual children.

WFDC: Windermere Family Day Care.

Policy Statement

TO ADEQUATELY SUPERVISE CHILDREN AND IMPLEMENT ROBUST RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO PROTECT THEM FROM GETTING LOST OR GOING MISSING.

EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE NO CHILD IS LEFT UNSUPERVISED, OR ALONE WITH A VISITOR, STUDENT OR VOLUNTEER WHILST ENROLLED IN CARE.

Procedures

Responsibilities of the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person:

1. To ensure that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met.
2. To ensure that staff and Educators have knowledge of and adhere to this policy.
3. To ensure that the WFDC approved residence or venue is organised and maintained to facilitate effective supervision of children while maintaining the rights and dignity of all children.



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4. To assist in the development and regular review of risk assessments and strategies for both the indoor and outdoor area which will support the Educator to position themselves effectively to allow them to observe the maximum area possible.
5. To provide Educators with information and guidance to ensure a range of strategies are used to provide effective supervision in any situation/environment including conducting regular head counts.
6. To conduct a thorough review of any risk assessments submitted for transportation of children and excursions to ensure supervision is adequately planned for.

Responsibilities of the Educator:

1. To provide a child safe environment by ensuring adequate supervision at all times while children are in care. Educators must be fully aware of each child's whereabouts and alert to their needs.
2. To ensure children are never left alone with students, volunteers and/or visitors (under any circumstance) whilst at the WFDC residence or during routine outings and excursions.
3. Ensure children do not have access to unregistered areas (indoor and outdoor spaces that have not been safety checked and approved) of the WFDC residence.
4. To ensure the front door and back door/gate (if applicable) remained LOCKED/SECURED to prevent unwarranted access and/or children exiting. Keys must be placed on hook near exits and be inaccessible to children.
5. To give consideration to the design and arrangement of children's environments and organise play-based activities to support the facilitation of adequate supervision.
6. To ensure independent play is within the sight and/or hearing of the Educator. On occasion that independent play may not be in the direct line of sight, listen closely to children noticing changes in volume or tone of voice.
7. To closely supervise children in their care, while still allowing them opportunities for exploration and supporting appropriate risk taking within safe boundaries.
8. To provide direct, active supervision when children participate in higher-risk activities (i.e. an excursion/experience involving water or an outing amongst crowds).
9. To implement vigilant supervision strategies for routine hygiene practices such as handwashing and toileting.
10. To respond appropriately to the various levels of supervision required due to children's differing ages and individual needs. For example, infants and toddlers require Educators to stay within a closer proximity than school aged children.
11. To directly supervise children during mealtimes.
12. To ensure children are not left unsupervised in a car for any reason. This applies even if the vehicle remains within sight of the Educator.
13. To support parents in educating children to 'stay safe'. Safety tips and stranger awareness messages will be shared with children as deemed appropriate, through CSS resources and activities.
14. Where a child is lost or missing, or cannot be accounted for, the Educator must immediately:



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- a. Contact the police on 000 advising them of the situation.
- b. Notify the co-ordination unit on 03 8793 4225, during business hours (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri) or 0408 591 457 outside of business hours.
- c. Contact the child's parents/guardian or an authorised person, as listed in the enrolment form (if parents/guardians uncontactable).

NOTE: a WFDC Educator Incident Report Form and/or Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Record must be submitted to EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au within 12hrs and the Coordination Unit will make a notification to the regulatory authority. Refer to the *Incident Reporting* policy for further information.

Relevant Legislation/ Standards

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law 2011 (Amended 2024)
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Amended 2024)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for children)
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (2014)

Related Policies & Links

- WFDC Policies/Procedures:
 - 1.02 Excursions and Outings
 - 1.08 Enrolment
 - 2.09 Supervision
 - 2.20 Emergency Procedures
 - 2.23 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
 - 2.25 Children's Arrival to & Departure from WFDC
 - 3.01 Safe Transportation
 - 3.02 Safety Check
 - 7.03 Incident Reporting
 - 7.04 Record Keeping
 - 7.12 Assessment, Approval and Re-Assessment of Approved FDC Residences/Venues
- WFDC Educator Incident Report Form: [WFDC Educator Incident Report Form V1.pdf](#)
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Record: [incident-injury-trauma-and-illness-record-form.pdf](#)