

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Name of Home Child Care Agency: Little Lambs Home Daycare Inc.

Date Policies and Procedures Established: December 15th, 2023

Date Policies and Procedures Updated: January 1st, 2024 (annually thereafter)

*Policy may be reviewed and amended earlier if Lillio app implements 'safe arrival/d dismissal' function, simplifying contact and communication procedures***

Purpose

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

This policy will provide home child care providers, staff (e.g., home child care visitor, home child care agency administrators, etc.), students and volunteers with a clear direction as to what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the home child care premises as expected, as well as procedures to follow to ensure the safe arrival and dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 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.

Expectation of Parent/Guardian

Commitment to Timely Communication: Parents/Guardians recognize the vital importance of timely communication in case of a child's unexpected absence or changes to drop-off/pick-up times. Parents/Guardians are committed to promptly informing their child care provider (via text/call/ or Lillio message) of any changes in attendance or responsibility for their child's safe arrival/departure. This Safe Arrival and Departure Mandate, effective January 1, 2024, introduces valuable safety measures, prioritizing the well-being of children in licensed child care. Parents/Guardians will thoroughly review the policy, actively taking responsibility for their role in respecting everyone's time and concerns.

Policy and Procedures

Accepting a child into care

The home child care provider is responsible for signing children in on the attendance record, utilizing Lillio child care software, as children arrive at the home premises where care is provided.

The home child care provider is responsible for ensuring any communication from parents/guardians related to drop-off changes or absences is noted within their daily written record and child's daily attendance notes.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

01. Where a child does not arrive at the home child care premises and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off or that the child will be absent (e.g., left a voice message or advised the home child care provider at pick-up) the home child care provider must:
 - a. contact the child's parent/guardian no more than 1 hour after the child's anticipated arrival time. Home child care providers shall send a message through the Lillio child care app [using SMS or email function] or text/call the parent/guardian [*whatever is easiest/most convenient for the child care provider and their child care clients.*]
 - b. If the child care provider does not make contact with the parent/guardian confirming child's absence they will be required to send a brief text message to the Little Lambs Home Daycare administrative number: 613-827-1441 no more than 30 minutes after the initial attempt, alerting to safe arrival alert/concern.
 - i. Brief text message should include: the child's name and when (time) the child care provider first attempted to make contact with parent/guardian.
 - c. A Little Lambs Home Daycare Staff will then: (follow steps i-v in order)
 - i. Reply to Home Child Care Provider confirming receipt of alert/concern.
 - ii. attempt to call the parent/guardian cell number, leave voicemail if no contact then, call the parent/guardian work number on file. Leaving a voicemail if no contact.
 - iii. If no contact is made in step (ii.) staff will immediately follow same procedure for second parent/guardian listed on the child's file *if available**
 - iv. If no contact is made in step (ii.-iii.) staff will immediately call 1 emergency contact listed on the child's file. Leaving a Voicemail if no contact.
 - v. If no contact is made after a period of 1.5 hours since the "Safe Arrival/Dismissal" procedure commenced, staff will contact local police services for a well-being check. Applicable notes will be added to the daily written record. *IF there are concerns of child safety/neglect (repeated pattern of safe arrival concerns), staff will follow 'duty-to-report' requirements with the Children's Aid Society.*
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, the home child care provider (or Little Lambs Home Daycare Administrative staff, if applicable) shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

The home child care provider shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or another individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child may be released to.

Where the home child care provider does not know the individual picking up the child, the home child care provider must 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 provided by parent/guardian. [Written authorization can include; a dated and signed written physical note, a text message, or a Lillio daycare app message. The written authorization must include the authorized persons full name and any relevant details; *one-time or on-going permission, schedule, etc.*]

Where a child has not been picked up as expected

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by the child care providers closing time, or, no more than 1 hour after scheduled pick-up time (whatever is earlier), the home child care provider shall ensure that child's emotional and physical well-being continues to be supported, while they await their pick-up. [no comments shall be made to the child or in a way that the child will overhear that could cause worry, concern, or shame for the child.]
2. The Home Child Care Provider shall contact the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire about their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the home child care provider will use their discretion (considering their knowledge of their individual client's circumstances/wishes) as to whether they contact the 'authorized individual' first, or to call parent/guardian first.
3. Where the home child care provider is the person contacting the parent/guardian and they have been unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the home child care provider shall send a brief text message to the Little Lambs Home Daycare administrative number: 613-827-1441 no more than 30 minutes after the initial attempt, alerting to safe dismissal alert/concern.
 - a. A Little Lambs Home Daycare staff will work collaboratively with the Home Child Care Provider to continue attempting contact with the child's parent/guardian(s), and authorized person(s).
4. Where a Little Lambs Home Daycare staff and/or Home Child Care Provider is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., emergency contacts) after 30 minutes of the child care programs closure or 1.5 hours from the child's scheduled dismissal time (if earlier in the day), the home child care provider shall proceed with contacting Highland Shores Children's Aid Society (CAS) at 613-962-9291 (option 1 to connect with child welfare concern operator). The home child care provider shall follow CAS's direction with respect to next steps. The home child care provider shall also advise the Little Lambs Home Daycare staff member who had supported in step 3. and add detailed notes to their daily written record.
 - a. If needed/requested a Little Lambs Home Daycare staff may drive to the impacted child care program to offer in-person support.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Following the Outdoor Supervision Policy and Procedure for school age children and where a parent/guardian has provided written and signed authorization for their child to be released from care without supervision, the home child care provider is responsible for dismissing the child from care. The written and signed authorization form must be reviewed by the RECE Home Visitor with the Home Child Care Provider before it can be implemented at the child care premises. The review will ensure the written instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian are sufficient in detail, appropriate to the child's developmental and physical capabilities and are understood by all.

Prior to dismissing the child from care, the home child care provider shall ensure the child's health and well-being are adequate to ensure their safe arrival at school (or intended location), once dismissed from the home child care premises. It is the child care provider's responsibility to release the child at the time set out in the instructions, unless there is a reasonable concern for the child's safety and well-being. The home child care provider shall document the time of departure by checking the child 'out' of the Lillio app, noting 'unsupervised dismissal' following Outdoor Supervision Plan.

Duty of Care: Reasonable Concern

If for whatever reason the child care provider does not feel comfortable dismissing the child without supervision the child care provider should not dismiss the child and immediately contact the child's parent/guardian for guidance.

Reasonable concerns to not dismiss child 'unsupervised' could include, but are not limited to;

1. Illness: the child does not appear well enough to walk or bike themselves to their intended destination.
2. Behaviour: the child's behaviour is erratic and/or otherwise 'different' from the child's 'normal' and the provider is concerned about dismissing the child unsupervised.
3. Environment: there is a community event/alert that raises concern for the child's safety while 'unsupervised' in the child's travel area.

'Duty of Care' supersedes any written authorization or plan agreed upon between the home child care provider and the parent/guardian. Where there is reasonable concern, duty of care voids the provider's responsibility to dismiss the child from care 'unsupervised.' The safety and well-being of the children entrusted to our care is our number one priority. Any resulting conflict or concern is to be shared with Little Lambs Home Daycare staff or the RECE Home Visitor.

Glossary

Home Child Care Provider: The person in charge of the children in a premises where home child care is provided.

RECE Home Child Care Visitor: An employee of the home child care agency who will provide support at and monitor each premises and will be responsible to the licensee.

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 license issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the home child care 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.

Little Lambs Home Daycare Staff: Inclusive of RECE Home Visitors and Agency administrative staff with valid background safety checks/credentials, who have access to client files.

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 premises.