

# POLICY STATEMENT

## INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

### AUTHORISATION

<b>POLICY TYPE:</b>	Operational
<b>POLICY LOCATION:</b>	Corporate
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Coordinator Children Services
<b>AUTHORISED BY:</b>	Director, Corporate and Community Services
<b>DATE ADOPTED:</b>	11 March 2025
<b>ADOPTED BY:</b>	Manex
<b>MINUTE NO:</b>	
<b>REVIEW DUE DATE:</b>	March 2027
<b>REVISION NUMBER:</b>	
<b>RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN</b>	This Policy supports Council's Delivery Program Strategy 4.2: Provide quality, accredited and affordable Education and Care within Bland Shire and surrounds (Bland Preschool, Mobile Resource Unit and Toy Library Services).

### DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS	AMENDED BY
0	August 2014		CSU Coordinator
1	October 2018		CSU Coordinator
2	May 2021		CSU Coordinator
3	May 2022		CSU Coordinator
4	March 2025		CSU Coordinator

### REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed within two (2) Years from the date of adoption or as required in the event of legislative changes or business practice changes. Any amendment to the Policy must be by approval of the General Manager/Manex.

## 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide educators about the safety and well-being of children during transition times, between the parent and the service during drop off and collection times.

## 2. Scope:

This policy document applies to all staff and educators employed at Bland Shire Children Services Unit.

## 3. Outcomes:

To clearly advise staff, educators and families about the safety and well-being of children during arrival and departure times to promote a smooth transition between home and the service, whilst meeting regulation requirements, law and the service adhering to its duty of care.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The implementation of this policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Service, Educators and Parents and Authorised nominees enrolled within a Bland Shire Children Service. Each role is listed below in the policy procedure.

## 5. Definitions:

In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to people employed by Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit. "Families" refer to parent/carers of children enrolled at the service.

## 6. Legislation and Supporting Documents:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2020) Guide to National Quality Framework.

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

## 7. Attachments:

### Policy Procedure

#### The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 regarding the delivery and collection of children.

#### The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide service access to parents/visitors at any time, unless entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/educators or breach court orders regarding access to children.

#### The Service will:

- Maintain records of attendance through digital app/portal including.
  - The date
  - The full name of enrolled child
  - Arrival and Departure times
  - Encourage parents/authorised nominees to sign children into and out of the service using individualised PIN codes.
- As part of the induction process, communicate to educators the arrival and departure procedures.
- Explain to families their legal obligations of delivery and collection of their children, and the importance of signing in/out.

- As part of the service enrolment parents/guardians provide the names/contact details of any person authorised to collect their child from the service, authorise an educator to take their child outside the education and care service (excursion), be an emergency contact in the event the parent/s cannot be contacted, authorise medical treatment/administration of medications and authorise transport of the child.
- In the event a parent requests a person NOT listed on the enrolment to collect their child, the parent will be required to complete the “Addition of Contact/Authorised Nominee” form through the parent app. The person will be added to the child’s file and a PIN code will be distributed for sign in/out purposes.
- Request parents provide current and relevant documentation relating to any person who in **not** permitted to collect their child (Court order/AVO). This documentation is securely stored in the child’s file and only accessed to confirm orders in place (days, times and persons).

Please note – The service is bound by the rulings of the Family Court.

The service is unable to deny or prevent access to any child by a guardian who can prove they are the natural parent of the child. Educators have no legal right to prevent the removal of the child from the service who can provide such documentation/identification, unless under direct court order/ruling.

In the event there is an attempt to remove a child by a non-custodian parent or unknown persons, educators will assess the risk of the situation and prioritise the safety of all within the service.

Educators are encouraged to make a safe attempt to retain the child within the service. In the event of the child being removed from the service the following information is to be observed – time, description of person, car registration, direction car took, and possible location of the child. This information must immediately be forwarded to the police, the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider and the custodial parent.

#### **The Educators will:**

- Ensure the child only leaves the service in the care of:
  - A parent of the child (using individual PIN code, or unless prohibited by a court order)
  - An authorised nominee named in the enrolment or app.
  - A person authorised by a parent or authorised nominee named in the enrolment/app to collect the child from the service.
  - In accordance with the digital/written authorisation of the child’s parent or authorised nominee named in the child’s enrolment record/file.
  - Take children on outings/excursion as per authorisations.
  - Transported by the service or on transportation arranged by the service in accordance with regulations.
  - Requires medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment and in case of another emergency.
- If the person collecting the child appears “unfit” to take responsibility of the child, attempt to persuade and assist the parent to seek alternative arrangements before releasing the child into their care. Educators and staff will always act in the interest of safety for the child, themselves and other children within the service. It is the educator’s discretion to determine if they believe an authorised person is unable to appropriately care for the child based on the individual case and circumstance.
- Ensure unknown authorised nominees show photo ID and the information is checked against the enrolment records prior to signing the child out. If unsure about the person, educators should seek advice from the parent for verification.
- Upon closure of the service, ensure all children have been signed out of the portal/app. In the event a child has not been signed out, look for visual clues to locate their whereabouts (lockers, bag). Communicate with classroom educators to determine the child was collected and by who. Educators will then sign the child out

on the parents' behalf, advising 'parent/nominee forgot to sign out'. If educators cannot confirm the child was collected, the room leader is to contact the family to ensure the child is in their care.

- During term 1 children are encouraged to walk to the service safely by the service providing an educator at the gate to distribute stamps to children that demonstrate road safety. Children that hold a parent hand when crossing the road or walking on the foot path receive a stamp and praise for making safe choices. This initiative will continue should a regression of this safe behaviour be witnessed.
- Greet families and find out about the child's needs for the day.
- Support children to participate in an activity, assist with separation for both adults and children when saying goodbye.
- Welcome families at the conclusion of the day and communicate about their child's day. Any changes in the "normal day" of the child will be communicated. ie Incidents, medication, sleep etc.

#### **Families will:**

- Complete attendance records as required at the service through devices provided.
- Be asked to provide relevant documentation and information relating to any person who is **not** permitted to collect their child (court order, AVO). Families are responsible for informing Service management of custody and access arrangements on enrolment and must advise the Service immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements.
- Notify the Service of any changes to the collection of their child which may be a 'one off' occurrence. The parent will be required to complete the "Addition of Contact/Authorised Nominee" form through the parent app. The person will be added to the child's file and a PIN code will be distributed for sign in/out purposes.
- Ensure all authorised nominee information is current.
- On occasions where a parent will be delayed it is requested that the parent contact the Service to make arrangements for late collection.
- If a parent fails to collect the child the Responsible Person/Educator will attempt to contact the parent, if unsuccessful contact is to be made with authorised child emergency contacts. In failing to contact authorised emergency contacts, police are to be notified.
- Communicate any changes of routine with educators. This communication may include information about medication, a change of routine, a person other than a known authorised adult picking up a child and completing documentation or if there is a change in time of arrival or departure for a child. These must be known by educators to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child.
- Remain responsible for their child whilst they are on the education and care premises.

#### **Authorised Nominees will:**

- be 16 years of age or older;
- provide photo ID prior to the collecting and signing out of child/ren if unknown to Educators.

### **TRANSPORTATION BY SCHOOL BUS SERVICE TO AND FROM A BLAND SHIRE CHILDREN SERVICE (including Family Day Care residents)**

#### **Educators will**

- Ensure that written authorisation has been obtained from the parent/guardian, including an 'Application for Transport by Bus' form, for the child being transported before the child is able to utilise the school bus service.
- The nominated educator will document the time and date each child embarked or disembarked the bus. The nominated educator will conduct a sweep of the bus upon morning arrival and sign the children in that utilised the bus service.

- Not accept children into care prior to the specified service times.
- In the instance, a child is not on the morning bus for collection, liaise with the school bus driver as to whether the child boarded the bus, and if so conduct a search of the bus in consultation with the school bus driver. If the child is still unaccounted for, alert the Nominated Supervisor and clarify the child's whereabouts with the parent/guardian. If required, procedures for a lost child are to be followed, including notifying Police immediately and being guided by their direction.
- In the instance; a child does not arrive at home at the expected time, Educators will communicate with the parent/guardian confirming if the child boarded the bus, and if so giving the time and bus details as recorded. If the child did not board the bus, Educators will liaise with parents regarding if the child remains at the service or has been collected by an authorised nominee.
- Place the child on the relevant designated bus, unless notification of a change of transport arrangement is received in writing. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to advise the service in writing (email or text is acceptable) of any current day changes in travel arrangements for the child. Long term and permanent changes will require a new "Bus Application" to be completed and approved to reflect the new schedule.

### **Parent/guardian will**

- Contact the service asap to advise if their child is sick or away on a scheduled bus service day.
- Make arrangements for the child's travel directly with the relevant school bus company. This transport arrangement is between the School Bus Service(s) stated on the permission form and the parent/guardian.
- Provide a completed 'Application for Transport by Bus' form signed by both the parent/guardian and bus driver. Written approval must be given from the Nominated Supervisor or Senior ECT prior to the child commencing using school bus transport to travel to and from a Bland Shire Children Service.
- A new bus application is required at the commencement of each year to ensure information on the child's bus travel arrangements held by the service is current.
- Advise the school bus driver that the child cannot arrive at the relevant service prior to the times indicated below and must be handed to a staff member on arrival.
  - a) Bland Preschool – children must not be dropped off prior to 8.30am.
  - b) Ungarie Preschool – no drop off option available
  - c) MRU Friday Class - children must not be dropped off prior to 8.30am.
- Give permission for the staff/Educator, on the parent/guardians' behalf, to sign the child into the service and note the time of arrival and departure via the Attendance Register.
- When a child is starting to use a school bus service for the first time, implement strategies such as a 'bus buddy' for the child, for example a family member or friend to guide the child to support safety. Personally introduce the child to the driver to ensure the child is known to the driver.
- Acknowledge that the Bland Shire Council and Bland Shire Children Services Unit are not liable or responsible for children outside times stated in the Portal/App.
- Be aware of all locations specific and general road safety requirements including details about where to park to deliver and collect children, observe speed limits in the vicinity of the service, using the 'safety door' (the rear kerbside door), driveway safety and role modelling safe road use.
- Communicate any issues or concerns relating to the child's safety or wellbeing to the Children Services Unit.