

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York

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SERIOUS OCCURRENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Date Policy and Procedures Established: May 2018

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: January 21, 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and the procedures within is to provide clear instructions for staff, students and volunteers to follow for how to identify, respond to and report a serious occurrence. It ensures that there is a plan to deal with any serious incidents that may affect the health, safety and well-being of children and those working directly with children, and that these serious incidents are reported, tracked and followed up on.

This policy requires that an annual review be conducted of serious occurrences that took place over the last calendar year for an opportunity to reflect on the incidents that took place and consider approaches that will be implemented to minimize the chance that the incidents will occur again in the future.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures with respect to serious occurrences for child care centres.

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

POLICY

Identifying a Serious Occurrence

Under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, serious occurrences are defined as:

1. the death of a child who received child care at a child care centre,
2. abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a child care centre,
3. a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a child care centre,
4. an incident where a child who is receiving childcare at a childcare centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or
5. an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a childcare centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving childcare at the childcare centre.

Note: Appendix A provides examples and scenarios of reportable and non-reportable incidents.

Reporting a Serious Occurrence

Staff will notify the licensee, supervisor or designate of a serious occurrence as soon as they become aware of the incident.

All serious occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education in the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) within 24 hours of the licensee, supervisor or designate becoming aware of the occurrence.

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Identifying information such as children or staff names will not be included in the serious occurrence reports.

If CCLS cannot be accessed (e.g. where CCLS or an internet connection is unavailable), the licensee, supervisor or designate will notify the program advisor (PA) assigned to the licence by email or by telephone within 24 hours of becoming aware of the occurrence. A serious occurrence report will be submitted in CCLS as soon as the system can be accessed.

Where a Ministry of Education PA cannot be reached by telephone, a voicemail message will be left to notify the PA of the incident.

All updates to serious occurrences will be reported in CCLS through update reports until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education.

Where the Ministry of Education requests updates to a serious occurrence in CCLS, these will be provided as soon as possible through update reports.

Serious occurrences reported to the Ministry of Education will be documented in the daily written record.

PANDEMIC OUTBREAK COVID-19 REPORTING

- Changes to serious occurrence reporting for COVID-19 related matters

Effective **January 13, 2022**, childcare licensees will only be required to report a serious occurrence for COVID-19 related matters for:

- a. Confirmed COVID-19 cases;** An individual testing positive based on PCR Test
- b. For a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 with a Public Health Ordered Closure or Voluntary Closure of Entire Child Care Centre or Home Child Care Premises Related to COVID-19**

To support these changes, the serious occurrence categories related to COVID-19 have been updated in the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS):

Confirmed COVID-19 cases

For a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 with **no** Related Public Health Ordered Closure

- Submit a serious occurrence in CCLS under "Confirmed COVID-19" category

For a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 **with** a Public Health Ordered Closure

- Submit a serious occurrence in CCLS under '**Confirmed COVID-19**' category, including information about the closure (ordered by Public Health or voluntary closure of entire childcare centre or home childcare premises related to COVID-19) in the fields provided, specifying whether it is public health ordered or voluntary

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- Where there is a confirmed case, and **a closure is subsequently ordered by Public Health or decision made to voluntarily close** entire childcare centre or home childcare premises related to COVID-19 while the serious occurrence under "Confirmed COVID-19" category is still open, **please revise the existing serious occurrence** to include the closure information in the fields provided, specifying whether it is public health ordered or voluntary
- Where a closure is ordered by public health or decision is made to voluntarily close related to COVID-19 **after** a serious occurrence has been **closed**, submit a **new** serious occurrence for a "disruption of service" with the subcategory of "Public Health Closure of Entire Centre or Home Premises Related to COVID-19" or "Voluntary Closure of Entire Centre or Home Premises related to COVID-19"

Examples of voluntary closures of childcare centres premises related to COVID-19:

- School makes the decision to close the entire school therefore entire childcare centre closes ****where time-limited mandates closure of all schools is in effect, this is not a reportable serious occurrence e.g. Before and After school programs.**
- Licensee decides to close entire childcare centre due to not having enough staff
- Licensee decides to close entire childcare centre premises due to confirmed case(s)
- Any time a licensee decides to close the entire program for any reason related to COVID

PLEASE NOTE: Where there is an open serious occurrence for a confirmed case of COVID19, should additional persons test positive (confirmed case/s), please do not submit a new serious occurrence for the new confirmed case/s.

Revise the existing/open serious occurrence report to add the information related to the new confirmed case/s. **Do not remove any resolved cases from count.**

Unplanned Disruption of Service - Ordered by Local Public Health Unit or Voluntary Closures

For public health ordered closures with no confirmed COVID-19 cases

- Where public health orders a closure of the entire childcare centre with **no** confirmed COVID-19 case, submit a serious occurrence in CCLS under 'Unplanned Disruption of Service' with subcategory of 'Public Health Closure of Entire Centre or Home Premises Related to COVID-19'

For Voluntary closures of entire childcare centre with no confirmed COVID-19 cases

- Where there is a voluntary closure of childcare centre with **no** confirmed COVID-19 case, submit a serious occurrence in CCLS under 'Unplanned Disruption of Service' with subcategory of 'Voluntary Closure of Entire Centre or Home Premises related to COVID-19'

Please note that program room closures are not a reportable serious occurrence. Only Public Health Ordered and Voluntary Closures of the **entire** childcare centre is a reportable serious occurrence

Moving forward, a serious occurrence is **not** required for a **parent of a child** with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

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Where there is an existing/open serious occurrence in CCLS under 'Unplanned Disruption of Service with the subcategory of 'Public Health Closure of Entire Centre or Home Premises Related to COVID-19' or the subcategory of 'Voluntary Closure of Entire Centre or Home Premises related to COVID-19' and an individual develops a confirmed case of COVID-19, **please revise the serious occurrence type in CCLS from 'Unplanned Disruption of Service' to 'Confirmed Case of COVID-19'**.

Below is the current list of individuals with a confirmed case of COVID-19 for whom a serious occurrence report is required:

- i. a **child who receives child care** at a home child care premises or child care centre,
 - ii. a home child care **provider**,
 - iii. a person who is **ordinarily a resident of a home child care premises** (e.g. the home provider's child, the home provider's spouse etc.; for complete definition please refer to the Home Child Care Licensing Manual)
 - iv. a person who is **regularly at a home child care premises** (eg. the home provider's friend who visits the premises once a week etc.; for complete definition please refer to the Home Child Care Licensing Manual),
 - v. a **home child care visitor**,
 - vi. a **staff** member at a child care centre
 - vii. a **student** at a home child care premises or child care centre,
- If this case resulted in **voluntary closure by the licensee**, this serious occurrence **will be closed in CCLS by the ministry**.
 - If this case has resulted in a **public health ordered closure**, this serious occurrence **will remain open** until it is resolved.

PENDING REVISIONS

After your program advisor has reviewed the serious occurrence, the report will be returned to you in CCLS for revision. The serious occurrence will remain with you until you have new information resulting in a revision. Serious occurrences cannot be revised if they are with the program advisor. In order to revise the report, the serious occurrence needs to be returned to you with a request for revision.

Program Advisor Child Care Quality Assurance & Licensing Early Learning Division for the Ministry of Education Toronto—Central North Region: check with CCLS for current PA assigned to the centre.

Posting a Serious Occurrence Summary (Notification Form)

Within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious occurrence, Supervisor will complete a Serious Occurrence Notification Form in either CCLS or using the form available in Appendix B.

The form will provide a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by the child care centre.

The summary will not include identifying information (e.g. names and ages of children, staff, or program rooms) and will contain gender-neutral language.

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The summary will be posted at the child care centre in a place that is visible and accessible to parents for a minimum of 10 business days, regardless of the serious occurrence type and the status of any related investigation.

All updates to the serious occurrence will be added to the posted summary, and the summary will remain posted for an additional 10 business days each time any updates are added.

All serious occurrence summaries will be retained for 3 years from the date they are created or last updated (whichever date is most recent).

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

If any person, including a person who performs professional duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered, or is at risk to suffer, physical or emotional harm or sexual exploitation or molestation inflicted by the person having charge of the child, the person will report the suspicion directly to a children's aid society (CAS).

Suspected abuse or neglect that will be reported will include physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect.

Where a parent expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact their local CAS directly. The person who becomes aware of these concerns is also required to report the concerns to the local CAS.

Procedures to Respond to a Serious Occurrence

Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences

Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
<p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Ask for assistance from other staff, students, or volunteers.</p> <p>Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training, where applicable.</p> <p>Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel, where applicable,</p> <p>Ensure that other children are removed from the scene and do not have access to the area, where applicable.</p> <p>Address any risks to the health or safety of the child and/or other children present to prevent the risk of further harm.</p> <p>Notify the supervisor/designate.</p>	<p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Provide assistance to children, staff, students, volunteers and families.</p> <p>Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training.</p> <p>Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel, where applicable.</p> <p>2. Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:</p> <p>Collect all pertinent information to report the incident to the Ministry of Education as a serious occurrence, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A description of the incident; ○ The date, time, place where it occurred, actions taken and outcome; ○ The current status of the incident and child/parties involved; and

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Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
<p>2. Ongoing and after the incident:</p> <p>Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. police, CAS, public health, etc.)</p> <p>Ensure that children are supervised at all times.</p> <p>3. Within 3 hours of becoming aware of the incident.</p> <p>Document the incident in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the daily written record; the child's record of symptoms of illness, if applicable; and/or in an accident report, if applicable. <p>Where an accident report is created, provide a signed copy to a parent of the child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All other parties notified (e.g., emergency services, CAS, parents). <p>3. Report the serious occurrence in CCLS, or notify the Ministry of Education program advisor by telephone or email where CCLS is not available. Note: Where CCLS is not available, a serious occurrence report will be submitted in CCLS as soon as it becomes available.</p> <p>4. Post a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by the child care centre in a place that is visible and accessible to parents.</p> <p>5. Ongoing and after the incident:</p> <p>Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. police, CAS, public health, etc.)</p> <p>Maintain confidentiality at all times.</p> <p>Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.</p> <p>Conduct an internal review of the serious occurrence with staff, students and volunteers to establish next steps and reduce probability of repeat occurrences.</p> <p>Provide children, parents, staff, students and/or volunteers with supports, if needed.</p> <p>Review with staff, students and volunteers the child care centre's program statement policies and procedures that set out prohibited practices and expectations of promoting the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all children.</p>

Steps to Follow According to Specific Serious Occurrence Categories

Serious Occurrence Category	Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
<p>Death of a Child</p>	<p>Death occurs while a child is receiving child care:</p> <p>See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers.</p>	<p>See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate, and</p> <p>a) Death occurs while a child is receiving child care:</p>

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Serious Occurrence Category	Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
		<p>1. Immediately, upon becoming aware of the incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact a parent of the child, or where a parent cannot be reached; contact the child's emergency contact. <p>b) Death occurs while a child is not receiving child care:</p> <p>Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact local Children's Aid Society (CAS) or police services to find out if there is an investigation. If an investigation is ongoing, conduct an internal investigation after CAS or police services have completed their investigation, if applicable.
<p>Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect</p>	<p>'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and</p> <p>Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by any person:</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Report concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i> (CFSA).</p> <p>Document the conversation with CAS and follow their recommendations.</p> <p>Notify the supervisor/designate of the incident and the report made to CAS, where appropriate.</p>	<p>See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate, and</p> <p>Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by a staff, student or volunteer, or where a person has otherwise reported alleged abuse/neglect concerns to the supervisor/designate:</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Notify the person who reported concerns about their duty to report obligations under the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i> (CFSA).</p> <p>Report the concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the</p>

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Serious Occurrence Category	Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
	<p>Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.</p> <p>Maintain confidentiality at all times.</p>	<p>CFSA, unless it is confirmed that a report has already been made to CAS.</p> <p>Document the concerns.</p> <p>Contact and notify a parent of the child, where appropriate.</p> <p>Based on the nature of the allegation and/or the direction of CAS and/or internal policies, determine next steps such as disciplinary measures and additional actions, such as an internal investigation to protect children in care.</p> <p>Determine whether the individual alleged to have abused/neglected a child is registered with a professional regulatory body (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, etc.). If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Report the allegation of abuse to the appropriate regulatory body; o Report to the College of Early Childhood Educators when the employment of a registered early childhood educator (RECE) is suspended or terminated or if the RECE resigns. <p>Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.</p> <p>Maintain confidentiality at all times.</p> <p>2. Once all external investigations are complete (e.g. by police and/or CAS), if applicable:</p> <p>Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.</p> <p>Update all other authorities to whom the allegation was reported (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators,</p>

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Serious Occurrence Category	Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
		Ontario College of Teachers, CAS, etc.).
Life-threatening Injury or Illness a. Injury b. Illness	See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers.	See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate.
Missing or Unsupervised Child(ren) a. Child was found b. Child is still missing	<p>'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and</p> <p>1. Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child or children are missing:</p> <p>Alert the supervisor/designate, and all staff, students and volunteers;</p> <p>Search the child care premises, including outdoor areas (e.g. hallways, washrooms, playground, outdoor classrooms, etc.);</p> <p>Ensure that remaining children are supervised at all times.</p> <p>a) Where the child or children are <u>not found</u> after being deemed missing.</p> <p>Continue to search the premises. Update the supervisor/designate.</p> <p>b) Where the child or children <u>are found</u> after being deemed missing.</p> <p>Update the supervisor/designate.</p> <p>2. After the child or children have been found, after being deemed missing:</p> <p>Document the incident in the daily written record.</p>	<p>See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate, and</p> <p>1. Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child is missing:</p> <p>Assist with searching for the missing child(ren).</p> <p>a) Where the child or children are <u>not found</u> after being deemed missing:</p> <p>Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel.</p> <p>Contact the child(ren)'s parent(s), or where a parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.</p> <p>b) Where the child or children <u>are found</u> after being deemed missing:</p> <p>Update the child(ren)'s parent(s), or where a parent cannot be reached the child(ren)'s emergency contact(s).</p>

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Serious Occurrence Category	Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
<p>Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fire b. Flood c. Gas Leak d. Detection of Carbon Monoxide e. Outbreak f. Lockdown g. Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure 	<p>'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and</p> <p>a) Where the incident is suspected to be an <u>outbreak</u>:</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Notify the supervisor/designate on site of concerns.</p> <p>Separate children who are showing symptoms of illness from other children.</p> <p>Follow the child care centre's sanitary practices policy and procedures.</p> <p>2. Within 3 hours of becoming aware of the incident:</p> <p>Record symptoms of ill health in the affected child(ren)'s records,</p> <p>Document the incident in the daily written record.</p> <p>a) Where the incident is not an outbreak (all other disruptions of normal operations):</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Follow the child care centre's fire safety and evacuation plan and/or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.</p> <p>2. Within 3 hours of becoming aware of the incident:</p> <p>Document the incident in the daily written record.</p>	<p>See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate, and</p> <p>a) Where the incident is suspected to be an <u>outbreak</u>:</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Contact the local public health department.</p> <p>b) Where the incident is deemed an outbreak by public health:</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Follow instructions from the local public health department.</p> <p>Contact the parent(s) of the affected child(ren) and ensure the affected child(ren) are picked up by their parent(s) and/or taken to hospital.</p> <p>Obtain an outbreak posting from the local Medical Officer of Health and post in an area easily accessible for parents.</p> <p>Note: Outbreaks must be reported as a serious occurrence only if deemed an outbreak by public health.</p> <p>2. Within 24 hours:</p> <p>Notify all parents of children enrolled at the child care centre of the outbreak.</p> <p>a) Where the incident is <u>not deemed an outbreak</u>, follow sanitary practices policy.</p> <p>b) Where the incident is not an outbreak (all other disruptions of normal operations):</p> <p>1. Immediately:</p> <p>Follow the child care centre's fire</p>

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Serious Occurrence Category	Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers to Follow:	Steps for the Licensee/Supervisor/Designate to Follow:
		safety and evacuation plan and/or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable. Note: a hold and secure (an external threat in the area) is not a reportable serious occurrence.

Glossary

Children's Aid Society (CAS): A local agency with the exclusive mandate, under the *Child and Family Services Act*, to investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect and to deliver child protection services.

Emergency: An urgent or pressing situation in which immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults in the child care centre.

Interact: To be or become involved in communication, social activity or work with somebody else or one another (Source: Encarta Dictionary). Examples of interactions with children include conversing, playing, directing, intervening, supervising or assisting in fulfilling their needs (e.g. food/drink consumption, toilet use).

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Lockdown: A threat inside the building that will restrict movement within the child care centre.

Serious Occurrence: An incident that must be reported to the ministry of education within 24 hours.

HiMama: Is an all in one digital app parent/caregiver portal where parents can receive real time updates throughout the day. Email text and in-app communication- send messages, alerts and reminders to individual parents or to the entire centre.