

## Policy Introduction and Purpose

Transportation of children is provided as part of Weldon's school-aged programs, and sometimes as a part of our early year's programs. Compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations is mandatory to ensure the safety of children at all times. These requirements are reflected in our procedures and policy for transportation and the safe handover of children.

Weldon aims to ensure that all children being educated and cared for by our programs are adequately supervised at all times. This includes ensuring educator to child ratios are met whenever and wherever the Program is operating from, including providing transportation as part of our program activity.

## Our policy in action

### Weldon responsibilities:

Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury. Appropriate safety measures have been implemented through our comprehensive risk assessment process to ensure supervision is adequate at all times including when children are being transported. Educator to child ratios is adhered to in addition to ensuring the maximum numbers of children allowed per the service approval are not breached at any time. Adequate supervision is therefore not static as it is dependent upon a range of considerations documented in risk assessments.

## Definitions

**Regular outing:** in relation to an education and care service, means a walk, drive, or trip to and from a destination

- (a) that the Program visits regularly as part of its educational program; and
- (b) where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same on each outing

**Regular transportation:** in relation to an education and care service, means the transportation by the Program (other than as part of an excursion) of a child enrolled in the Program, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same for each occasion on which the child is transported.

**Written authorisation:** authorisation given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise the child being transported by the Program or on transportation arranged by the Program. *If transportation is regular transportation, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in 12 months.*

The authorisation must state:

- the child's name; and
- the reason the child is to be transported; and
- if the authorisation is for a regular outing, a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings; and
- if the authorisation is not for regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported; and

- a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination; and
- the means of transport; and
- the time during which the child is to be transported; and
- the anticipated number of children likely to be transported; and
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during transportation; and
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported; and
- that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the Program; and
- that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the Program

### Transport specific risk assessment

As per the Education and Care Services National Law, Weldon will “ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury” (Section 167).

- Our programs will conduct comprehensive transport-specific risk assessments to minimize and manage all potential risks for transporting children before an authorisation is sought to transport a child. [Reg. 102B, 102D (4)].
- A risk assessment will be undertaken at least annually for ‘regular transportation’ of children.
- Each time our program transports children as part of an excursion, a new risk assessment will be conducted.
- All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated to facilitate continuous improvement in our program.
- Our risk assessment process will:
  - identify any hazards or potential hazards that transporting the child may pose to the safety, health, and wellbeing of the child
  - assess the risk of harm or potential harm using a risk matrix
  - specify how the identified risks will be managed by eliminating or reducing the impact using control measures
  - evaluate the current risk or potential harm by implementing control measures
  - review and monitor the risk or potential harm to ensure it continues to be managed as a low risk
- Our risk assessment will include:
  - the proposed route and duration of the transportation; and
  - the proposed pick-up location and destination; and
  - the means of transport; and
  - any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints (as per the law of our jurisdiction); and
  - any water hazards; and
  - the number of adults and children involved in transportation; and

- given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialized skills are required; and
- whether any items should be readily available during transportation (mobile phone, list of emergency contact numbers) and.
- the process for entering and exiting:
  - the premises; and
  - the pick-up location or destination (as required); and
- procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.

**Management/ Nominated Supervisor's responsibilities:**

- risk assessments are carried out before seeking authorisation for transporting children
- risk assessments for 'regular transportation' are evaluated at least annually to ensure potential risks are identified and managed
- details of the safest route for travel, type of vehicle, and required restraints are included in the risk assessment
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury
- compliance with first aid requirements of Regulation 136 are met at all times
- parents/guardians complete a written authorisation for transportation of their child and a copy of this is filed in the child's enrolment record
- children are instructed on processes for entering and exiting the program premises and are aware of the pick-up and destination locations
- children's attendance is checked against an accurate attendance record showing when children are within the care of the Program. The record of attendance must record the time that the child arrives and departs the Program and signed by the nominated supervisor or educator
- children's attendance is checked by the supervising educator/staff before departure from the designated pick up location and marked as present as they disembark from the vehicle
- procedures for the safe handover of children between the Program and the school site is documented correctly
- educator to child ratio requirements are maintained at all times
- children exit the vehicle using the 'safety door'
- children wear approved seatbelts/restraints whilst the vehicle is in motion
- children are never left unattended in the vehicle
- education on road safety for children is included in the programming (for example Kids and Traffic,)
- safety rules are developed with children to ensure a clear understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- staff are aware of appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of a vehicle crash involving staff and children from the Program
- a working mobile phone is provided and available on the vehicle in case of emergency
- a list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported is available

- every effort will be made to notify parents/carers of delays returning to the Program if applicable
- relevant criminal history requirements and Working with Children Checks are made for any person transporting children. WWCC is recorded in staff records
- the person driving the vehicle/bus holds a current Australian driver's license
- any allegation of misconduct of the educator or staff member will be reported immediately as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme detailed in our Child Protection Policy.
- an easily recognised and suitably equipped first aid kit is easily accessible during transportation
- at least one staff member accompanying children during transportation holds:
  - an approved first aid qualification
  - a current approved anaphylaxis management training qualification and
  - an approved emergency asthma management training qualification

### Safe Maintenance of Weldon buses

#### Management/Nominated Supervisor responsibilities:

- the vehicle is fitted with the required child restraints, approved by the Roads and Traffic Authorities
- the vehicle has enough fuel to transport the children each day as per the schedule
- the vehicle is registered, roadworthy, and insured (general legal requirements and best practice standards are adhered to
- any repairs are completed as soon as possible by a qualified mechanic
- drivers hold a current Australian driver's license, licensed to carry the required number of passengers for the vehicle
- in the event of any mechanical or other breakdown, children will be kept safe, comfortable, and occupied with suitable activities
- every effort will be made to notify parents/carers of delays returning to the Program if applicable

#### Picking up children and during transportation

- the vehicle/bus will be parked in a safe location where children are not required to cross any roads (if this is unavoidable, a risk assessment and dedicated procedure for crossing the road will be completed)
- the children's attendance record is checked by the supervising educator/staff member as children assemble in a predetermined location before boarding
- children are continuously supervised during transportation by a designated educator/staff member sitting in a location that provides a clear vision of all children
- children are to remain seated until the vehicle/bus has completely stopped
- the designated driver of the vehicle/bus complies with all appropriate road, safety, and transport regulations
- under no circumstances will the driver of the vehicle/bus and educators supervising the children use handheld mobile phones unless safely parked
- under no circumstances will the driver and educators/employees supervising children be under the influence of alcohol or drugs

- the designated driver of the vehicle has the right if required to stop in a safe place until the children conform to the safety guidelines. Parents will be notified if their child continues to be challenging and/or behaving dangerously.

#### Dropping off children

- children are to remain seated until the bus has completely stopped
- a designated educator/staff member will assist children to safely disembark the bus
- children will exit the bus using the 'safety door' or door located near the kerb
- the children's attendance record will be checked by the supervising educator/staff as they assemble in a predetermined location at the end of the journey and verified by a witness
- educators/staff conduct a final sweep of the vehicle/bus, checking on and under seats to ensure there are no children or belongings left behind
- once inside (or on location) the children are signed in which will provide an additional attendance check to confirm all are present
- educators will record the time when children are signed into the Program or other venue

#### Families responsibilities:

- adhere to the Arrival and Departure Policy and Safe Transportation Policy
- communicate any change in transportation requirements for their child with management/nominated supervisor as soon as they are aware (for example no transport is required on a particular day as the child has returned home from school due to illness)
- notify the Program if their child is going to be absent on a particular day and not require transport
- ensure written permission for transportation of their child by the Program is granted by either the parent or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record
- update emergency contact numbers when required

#### Links to other policies

- Arrival and Departure
- Authorisation
- Excursion
- Enrolment Policy

### Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011)
- Kids and Traffic Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program (NSW)
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- Road Transport (Safety & Traffic Management) Act 1999.