

# **Child Care Centre Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures**

**Name of Child Care Centre: Main Square Day Care Centre**

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**Date Policy and Procedures Established: January 17th , 2023**

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**Date Policy and Procedures Updated: December 5, 2023**

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## **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 addressed by the child care centre and reported to the Ministry of Education for review.

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. a 30% confirmed cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in respect of,
  - children who receives child care at a child care centre
  - staff members at a child care centre
  - students at a child care centre

5. an incident where a child who is receiving child care at a child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or
6. an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the child care centre.

## **Reporting a Serious Occurrence**

- Staff will notify the licensee, director 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, director or designate becoming aware of the occurrence.
- 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, director 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.

## **Posting a Serious Occurrence Summary (Notification Form)**

- Within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious occurrence, June Hall / Director or Marcus Rodrigues/ Assistant Director will complete a Serious Occurrence Notification Form in either CCLS or using the form available in Appendix A.
- 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.
- 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.
- Where a serious occurrence is updated or revised, the summary should also be updated to reflect this change.

- 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.

## **Additional Policy Statements**

All staff employed at MSDCC are dedicated to providing the highest quality of care, on all levels. In the case of an serious occurrence, regardless of the nature, emergency and safety measures will be executed correctly.

All staff, students and volunteers will review and sign off on the centres Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedure prior to working for the first time and annually thereafter. Any changes to this policy are reviewed by all staff, students and volunteers immediately.

### **Debrief staff, students and volunteers**

Regardless of the nature of the serious occurrence, all staff, children and parents involved will be debriefed on the situation at hand. As soon as information about the serious occurrence is available for release, parents will be informed.

Topics that potentially can be discussed are as follows,

- The nature of the serious occurrence
- The speed and efficiency of the evacuation
- The effectiveness of the communication to parents
- How the emergency will affect the daycare going forward (temporary shelter, room closures etc.)
- Allow staff and parents to voice any issues (areas of strength and areas of weakness)
- Offer phone numbers or information about online support groups for people who need additional support or care in the days following the emergency

## **Serious Occurrence Annual Summary and Analysis Report**

The centre will complete a summary and study of all major incidents every year. This report will examine the number and type of serious incidents, identify any trends or patterns involving employees, kids, equipment, and physical plant or site that contributed to or caused the serious occurrence(s), and outline the action taken by MSDCC in response to the trends and patterns in serious incidents, as well as outline plans to maintain compliance in these areas. We will also examine any problems and the steps taken in relation to the prompt reporting of major incidents.

# **Procedures to Respond to a Serious Occurrence**

## **Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences**

### **STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:**

#### **1. Immediately:**

- Ask for assistance from other staff, students, or volunteers.
- Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training, where applicable.
- Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel, where applicable,
- Ensure that other children are removed from the scene and do not have access to the area, where applicable.
- Address any risks to the health or safety of the child and/or other children present to prevent the risk of further harm.
- Notify the director/designate.

#### **2. Ongoing and after the incident:**

- Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. police, CAS, public health, etc.)
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.

#### **3. Within 24 hours:**

- Document the incident in:
  - a. the daily written record;
  - b. the child's record of symptoms of illness, if applicable; and/or
  - c. in an accident report, if applicable.
- Where an accident report is created, provide a signed copy to a parent of the child.

## **STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE/ /DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

### **1. Immediately:**

- Provide assistance to children, staff, students, volunteers and families.
- Provide immediate medical assistance, if applicable, according to Standard First Aid and CPR training.
- Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel, where applicable.

### **2. Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:**

- Collect all pertinent information to report the incident to the Ministry of Education as a serious occurrence, including:
  - 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
  - All other parties notified (e.g., emergency services, CAS, parents).
- 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.
- 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.

### **5. Ongoing and after the incident:**

- Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (e.g. police, CAS, public health, etc.)
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.
- Conduct an internal review of the serious occurrence with staff, students and volunteers to establish next steps and reduce probability of repeat occurrences.
- Provide children, parents, staff, students and/or volunteers with supports, if needed.
- 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.

## Steps to Follow According to Specific Serious Occurrence Categories

### SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Death of a Child

#### STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

**Death occurs while a child is receiving child care:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers.

#### STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE/DIRECTOR /DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee director/ /Designate, and

**a) Death occurs while a child is receiving child care:**

**1. Immediately, upon becoming aware of the incident:**

- Contact a parent of the child, or where a parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.

**b) Death occurs while a child is not receiving child care:**

**Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:**

- 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.

### SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect

#### STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:

'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and

**Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by any person:**

**1. Immediately:**

- Report concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA).
- Document the conversation with CAS and follow their recommendations.
- Notify the director /designate of the incident and the report made to CAS, where appropriate.
- Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

## **STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE/DIRECTOR/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/director/ Designate, and

**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 director/designate:**

### **1. Immediately:**

- Notify the person who reported concerns about their duty to report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA).
- Report the concerns to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) as per the duty to report obligations under the CYFSA, unless it is confirmed that a report has already been made to CAS.
- Document the concerns.
- Contact and notify a parent of the child, where appropriate.
- 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.
- 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:
  - Report the allegation of abuse to the appropriate regulatory body;
  - 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.
- Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

### **2. Once all external investigations are complete (e.g. by police and/or CAS), if applicable:**

- Update the serious occurrence report in CCLS, as required.
- Update all other authorities to whom the allegation was reported (e.g. College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, CAS, etc.).

## **SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Life-threatening Injury or Illness**

- a. Injury**
- b. Illness**

## **STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers.

## **STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE DIRECTOR/ /DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/director /Designate.

### **SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: 30% Confirmed cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19)**

#### **STEPS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students

#### **STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE/DIRECTOR /DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

When Toronto Public Health closes the centre or the centre decides to close because more than 30% of the children and employees have COVID-19: See "Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences" for the Licensee/director /Designate.

1. Report the 30% confirmed cases to the local public health unit and provide any materials (e.g., daily attendance records) to public health officials to support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

### **SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Missing or Unsupervised Child(ren)**

- a. Child was found
- b. Child is still missing

#### **STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:**

'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and

##### **1. Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child or children are missing:**

- Alert the director/designate, and all staff, students and volunteers;
- Search the child care premises, including outdoor areas (e.g. hallways, washrooms, playground, outdoor classrooms, etc.);
- Ensure that remaining children are supervised at all times.

##### **a) Where the child or children are not found after being deemed missing.**

- Continue to search the premises.
- Update the director/designate.

##### **b) Where the child or children are found after being deemed missing.**

- Update the director/designate.

2. **After the child or children have been found, after being deemed missing:**

- Document the incident in the daily written record.

**STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE/DIRECTOR /DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/director /Designate, and

1. **Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child is missing:**

- Assist with searching for the missing child(ren).

**a) Where the child or children are not found after being deemed missing:**

- Call emergency services and follow direction from emergency services personnel.
- Contact the child(ren)'s parent(s), or where a parent cannot be reached, contact the child's emergency contact.

**b) Where the child or children are found after being deemed missing:**

- Update the child(ren)'s parent(s), or where a parent cannot be reached the child(ren)'s emergency contact(s).

**SERIOUS OCCURRENCE: Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations**

- a. Fire
- b. Flood
- c. Gas Leak
- d. Detection of Carbon Monoxide
- e. Outbreak
- f. Lockdown
- g. Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure

**STEPS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO FOLLOW:**

'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for staff, students and volunteers, and

**a) Where the incident is suspected to be an outbreak:**

1. **Immediately:**

- Notify the director/designate on site of concerns.
- Separate children who are showing symptoms of illness from other children.
- Follow the child care centre's sanitary practices policy and procedures.

2. **Within 24 hours:**

- Record symptoms of ill health in the affected child(ren)'s records,
- Document the incident in the daily written record.

**a) Where the incident is not an outbreak (all other disruptions of normal operations):**

**1. Immediately:**

- Follow the child care centre's fire safety and evacuation plan and/or the emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.

**2. Within 24 hours:**

- Document the incident in the daily written record.

**STEPS FOR THE LICENSEE/DIRECTOR /DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the Licensee/director /Designate, and

**a) Where the incident is suspected to be an outbreak:**

**1. Immediately:**

- Contact the local public health department.

**b) Where the incident is deemed an outbreak by public health:**

**1. Immediately:**

- Follow instructions from the local public health department.
- 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.
- Obtain an outbreak posting from the local Medical Officer of Health and post in an area easily accessible for parents.

Note: Outbreaks must be reported as a serious occurrence only if deemed an outbreak by public health.

**2. Within 24 hours:**

- Notify all parents of children enrolled at the child care centre of the outbreak.

**a) Where the incident is not deemed an outbreak, follow sanitary practices policy.**

**b) Where the incident is not an outbreak (all other disruptions of normal operations):**

**1. Immediately:**

- Follow the child care centre's fire 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.

## **Additional Procedures**

### **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

### **Consequences for Contravention of Prohibited Practises**

Behaviour that violates this policy will be reported as a serious occurrence, and may be considered child abuse. The following actions will be taken in response to every violation:

1. Any staff member observed using disciplinary measures that contravene the standards outlined in this document, shall be reported immediately to the day care Director. The Director will take immediate steps to investigate the alleged incident.
2. The Director will immediately speak privately to the staff member involved, at which time the Director will have to be satisfied that they have the facts, that the facts are as reported, that the incident is documented, a copy of the documentation is placed in the staff file. A letter of warning will be issued to the staff member.
3. If a second incident is reported and the Director is fairly certain that this incident occurred, the Director will briefly discuss the incident with the staff and proceed by sending them home. A meeting will be arranged for the next day with the staff member, the Director, and the Board of Directors.
4. The outcome of this meeting will be based on whether returning the employee to their job would place the children at risk, If the employee remains on staff, the employee will be issued a warning letter, and a copy of the letter will be placed in their file.
5. Any further incidents will result in immediate suspension, followed by an emergency meeting with the employee, the Director, and the Board of Directors, at which time dismissal would be considered.
6. If the Director is observed contravening the standards outlined in this document, the observer, whether parent or staff, will report the incident directly to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will attempt to get clarification and meet with the Director as quickly as possible in order to take appropriate measures.
7. The Board of Directors has to be satisfied that this is an isolated incident. However, if the Board hears of one or more further incidents the Board would follow steps 3, 4,

and 5, except that the meetings would be with the Director and the Board of Directors.

8. Documentation will be kept and filed at each step.

*Suspicion of Child Abuse:*

Main Square Day Care Centre is required by law under the Child and Family Services Act to report any suspicion of child abuse or risk for abuse. The following information is a brief summary of what the legal obligations are.

*Duty to Report:*

1. "All RECEs have a duty to report to a Children's Aid Society suspicions of harm and the risk of harm to a child under the Child and Family Services Act, 1990. This requirement includes reporting child abuse perpetrated by colleagues or other professionals. The College's Professional Advisory: Duty to Report highlights all of the responsibilities of RECEs under this legislation" (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2016, p. 17).
2. A person who works with children has an added legal responsibility to report immediately any suspicion of child abuse to a Children's Aid Society.
3. All child abuse reports are constituted as a serious occurrence by the centre, reports are filed with the Ministry of Education and Toronto Children's Services.

\*All employees, volunteers, and students who care for or supervise children at Main Square Day Care Centre will be observed for the purpose of monitoring the Supervision of Children and Compliance with the Prohibited Practise Policy. Observation will take place 3 times per year and recorded on the "Supervision of Children and Compliance with the Prohibited Practices Policy" form (see page 6). The observation recorded on this form is in addition to any mandatory reporting related to specific contraventions of our Prohibited Practise Policy.

\*All records of contraventions will be stored in a secure location for a period of 3 years from the date of review

## Glossary

**Children's Aid Society (CAS):** A local agency with the exclusive mandate, under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* 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.

**Parent:** 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 (all references to parent include legal guardians, but will only be referred to as "parent" in this policy).

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

**Staff:** Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

## Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15

### SERIOUS OCCURRENCES

**38.**

- (1) Every licensee shall ensure that,
  - (a) there are written policies and procedures with respect to serious occurrences in each child care centre operated by the licensee and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care, that address, at a minimum, how to identify, respond to and report a serious occurrence;
  - (b) a report is provided to a program adviser of any serious occurrence in any child care centre operated by the licensee or any premises where it oversees the provision of home child care within 24 hours of the licensee or director becoming aware of the occurrence;
  - (c) a summary of the report provided under clause (b) and of any action taken as a result is posted for at least 10 business days in a conspicuous place at the child care centre or home child care premises; and
  - (d) the report and the summary of the report are each kept in accordance with section 82.

**Disclaimer:** This document is a sample of a policy and procedure that has been prepared to assist licensees in understanding its obligations under the CCEYA and O. Reg. 137/15. It is the responsibility of the licensee to ensure that the information included in this document is appropriately modified to reflect the individual circumstances and needs of each child care centre it operates.

Please be advised that this document does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied on as such. The information provided in this document does not impact the Ministry's authority to enforce the CCEYA and its regulations. Ministry staff will continue to enforce such legislation based on the facts as they may find them at the time of any inspection or investigation.

It is the responsibility of the licensee to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation. If the licensee requires assistance with respect to the interpretation of the legislation and its application, the licensee may wish to consult legal counsel.