

CATEGORY: Policies and Procedures

SUBJECT: Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures

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Policy Statement

This policy fulfills the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures with respect to Serious Occurrences for childcare centres.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear procedures 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 Centennial Infant and Child Centre (CICC) and reported to the Ministry of Education for review.

Identifying a Serious Occurrence

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

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

Reporting a Serious Occurrence

- Staff will notify CICC management 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 CICC management 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), CICC management will notify the assigned Program Advisor (PA) 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 the serious occurrence, the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or designate will complete the **Serious Occurrence Notification Form** generated by CCLS or using the form attached to this policy.
- The form will:
 - Provide a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by CICC
 - Not include identifying information (e.g. names and ages of children, staff, or program rooms) and will contain gender-neutral language (e.g. they, a child)
 - Be posted for 10 business days in a visible and accessible location, regardless of the serious occurrence type and the status of any related investigation
- Where a serious occurrence is updated or revised, the summary will 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 a concern 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.

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 supervisor/designate.

2. Ongoing and after the incident:

- Follow any direction provided by third-party authorities (for example, police, CAS, public health, and more)
- Ensure that children in care 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 the child's parent.

STEPS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PRESCHOOL MANAGER OR 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. A description of the incident;
 - b. The date, time, place where it occurred, actions taken and outcome;
 - c. The current status of the incident and child/parties involved; and
 - d. All other parties notified (for example, 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 the Serious Occurrence Notification Form 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, and more)
 - 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 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:

If the death occurs **while the child is at CICC**, follow the “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for staff, students, and volunteers.

Steps for Executive Director, Preschool Manager, or Designate:

If the death occurs **while the child is at CICC**:

- Immediately upon becoming aware of the incident, contact the parent of the child and if the parent cannot be reached, contact the child’s emergency contact.

- Follow the “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager, or designate.

If the death occurs **while the child is not at CICC:**

Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident:

- Contact the local Children’s Aid Society (CAS) or police services to determine if there is an ongoing investigation.
- If an investigation is ongoing, conduct an internal investigation only 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:

- See "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:

Immediately:

- Report concerns to the local Children’s Aid Society (CAS) as required under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA).
- Document the conversation with CAS and follow their recommendations.
- Notify the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or 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 Executive Director, Preschool Manager, or Designate:

- See "Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences" for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or Designate.
- Where there is a concern about the abuse or neglect of a child by a staff member, student, or volunteer, or where a person has otherwise reported alleged abuse/neglect concerns:

Immediately:

- Notify the person who reported the concern of their duty to report obligations under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA).
- Report the concern to the local Children’s Aid Society (CAS), unless it has been confirmed that a report has already been made.
- Document the concern.
- Contact and notify the 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, including disciplinary measures and any additional actions required to protect children in care.

- Determine whether the individual alleged to have abused or neglected a child is registered with a professional regulatory body (e.g., College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers). If so:
 - Report the allegation 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.

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 any authorities to whom the allegation was reported (e.g., CAS, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers).

Serious Occurrence: Life-threatening Injury or Illness

Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers:

See “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for staff, students, and volunteers, and:

Immediately:

- Follow the child’s Individual Medical Plan or Anaphylactic Alert Plan, if applicable.
- Administer first aid and/or call 911 if necessary.
- Notify the Preschool Manager or designate as soon as possible.
- Contact the child’s parent immediately.
- Document the incident according to CICC policies.
- Refrain from discussing the incident with anyone outside of necessary parties.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Steps for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or Designate:

See “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or Designate, and:

Immediately:

- Follow the child’s Individual Medical Plan or Anaphylactic Alert Plan, if applicable.
- Ensure that emergency services are contacted if required.
- Ensure the child receives appropriate medical attention.
- Notify the child’s parent if this has not already been done.
- Document the incident thoroughly.
- Update the CCLS within 24 hours with the details of the serious occurrence.
- Follow up with any additional actions required, based on the nature of the incident.

- Maintain confidentiality and refrain from discussing the incident outside of the necessary parties.

Serious Occurrence: Missing or Unsupervised Child(ren)

Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers:

See “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for staff, students, and volunteers, and:

Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child or children are missing:

- Alert the Preschool Manager or designate, and all staff, students, and volunteers.
- Search for the child on all levels of the building including outdoor areas, hallways, offices and washrooms, etc.
- Ensure that remaining children are supervised at all times.

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

- Continue searching the premises.
- Update the Preschool Manager or designate.

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

- Update the Preschool Manager or designate.
- Document the incident in the daily written record.

Steps for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or Designate:

See “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager, or Designate, and:

Immediately, upon becoming aware that a child is missing:

- Assist with searching for the missing child.

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

- Call emergency services and follow the direction of emergency personnel.
- Contact the child’s parents, or if a parent cannot be reached, the child’s emergency contact.

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

- Notify the child’s parents, or if a parent cannot be reached, the child’s emergency contacts.
- Document the incident thoroughly.

Serious Occurrence: Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations

Includes: Fire, Flood, Gas Leak, Detection of Carbon Monoxide, Outbreak, Lockdown, Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure, Public Health-Ordered Closure

Steps for Staff, Students and Volunteers:

See “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for staff, students, and volunteers, and:

If Suspected Outbreak:

Immediately:

- Notify the Preschool Manager or designate on site of concerns.
- Separate children who are showing symptoms of illness from other children.
- Follow any directions provided by Toronto Public Health.

Within 24 hours:

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

If Not an Outbreak:

Immediately:

- Follow CICC’s fire safety and evacuation plan and/or emergency management policies and procedures, as applicable.
- Contact emergency services (911) where required (e.g., fire, gas leak, carbon monoxide, immediate danger).

Within 24 hours:

- Document the incident in the daily written record.

Steps for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager or Designate:

See “Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences” for the Executive Director, Preschool Manager, or Designate, and:

If Suspected Outbreak, contact Toronto Public Health department.

If Confirmed Outbreak by Toronto Public Health:

Immediately:

- Follow all instructions provided by Toronto Public Health.
- Contact the parents of the affected child(ren) to ensure the child(ren) are picked up or taken to hospital, if necessary.
- Obtain an outbreak posting from the local Medical Officer of Health and post it in an area easily accessible to parents.

Within 24 hours:

- Notify all parents of children of the outbreak.

If Not an Outbreak:

Immediately:

- Follow CICC's fire safety and evacuation plan and/or emergency management policies and procedures.
- Contact emergency services (911) as appropriate (fire, police, utility services).
- Ensure the safety and supervision of all children and staff.

Notes:

- Hold and secure (external threat in the area) is not a reportable serious occurrence.
- Child-specific medical emergencies (e.g., poisoning, anaphylaxis, life-threatening illness) are reported under "Life-Threatening Injury or Illness", not this category.
- Outbreaks are reported through Toronto Public Health direction and CCLS reporting requirements when applicable.
- Document all actions and communications in the daily written record.

Policy Review and Acknowledgement

- All staff, students and volunteers shall review this policy prior to commencing work or placement, whenever the policy is revised, and annually thereafter.
- Documentation of the review shall be maintained in personnel files.