

# CENTRAL EGLINTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE

## Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures

**Date Policy and Procedures Established: July 26, 2022**

**Date Policy and Procedures Updated: January 31, 2023, February 26, 2024**

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

**Note:** Within the parameters of the preceding definitions, CECC is responsible for determining whether an incident is deemed to be a serious occurrence as defined by these procedures and whether, therefore, it should be reported to the Ministry of Education.

## **Reporting a Serious Occurrence**

- Staff will notify the directors/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 directors 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 directors 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, the directors/designate will complete a Serious Occurrence Notification Form in either CCLS
- The form will provide a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by CECC.
- 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 CECC/St. Monica's 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.

If the serious occurrence is child abuse, caused by one of CECC's employees, the directors or designate will follow the procedures outlined in CECC's Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse Policy and the Human Resources Handbook.

### **Protection of Personal Information and Privacy**

To protect privacy and personal information, no child or staff names, initials, age or birth date, room or group names or classroom numbers will be used on the Serious Occurrences Notification form.

### **Storage and Retention of Information**

Serious Occurrence Notification forms that have been posted for 10 business days will be stored in the Serious Occurrences file in CECC's office. They will be stored for at least two years then shredded.

### **Family Handbook**

CECC has included a brief description of the Serious Occurrence Policy in its handbook. All CECC parents/guardians when enrolling with CECC will be shown the section in the handbook that outlines CECC's policies and procedures.

### **Training and Revision**

Before commencing employment/placement/volunteering, CECC educators, student teachers/volunteers will be required to sign an acknowledgement form stating that all the policies and procedures with respect to serious occurrences have been read, understood, and will be followed. Updated policies and procedures will be reviewed each year and brought to the attention of all employees, volunteers etc. for their advice and signature.

### **Debrief – Staff, Students and Volunteers**

CECC Directors or designate will ensure that staff, students, and volunteers are debriefed after a serious occurrence report is submitted to CCLS, when warranted. Follow-up with individuals will take place when necessary.

### **Debrief – CECC Families**

When necessary, CECC will debrief its families, either by email, a post on Storypark, or by a general meeting.

- The debriefs will include steps that may have prevented CECC from having to report, or to prevent further occurrences, how CECC handled the situation and to whom it was reported. Please note, the debriefs will be regarding general information, no names or sensitive matters will be disclosed or discussed.

### **Duty to Report**

Any incidents that involve an employee's violation of any of CECC's Policies, which are deemed reportable as a Serious Occurrence, will be dealt with by the Directors or designate, or by the Board of Directors if the incident involves the Director. If the incident involves an investigation, suspension or sanctions of duty, or termination, or if the employee resigns while an investigation is in process, CECC will report the employee to the College of Early Childhood Educators, as per its duty to report.

# 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 directors/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 always supervised.

**3. Within 24 hours:**

- Document the incident in:
  - a. the daily log.
  - 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 DIRECTORS/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

### **1. Immediately:**

- Aid the 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 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 childcare 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.)
- Always maintain confidentiality.
- 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 support, if needed.
- Review with staff, students and volunteers the childcare 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 childcare:

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

#### STEPS FOR THE DIRECTORS/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the /Directors/designate, and

##### **a) Death occurs while a child is receiving childcare:**

###### 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 childcare:**

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

- Contact the 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 directors/designate of the incident and the report made to CAS, where appropriate.
- Refrain from discussing the allegation with others.
- Always maintain confidentiality.

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

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the /Directors/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 directors/designate:**

### **1. Immediately:**

- Notify the person who reported concerns about their duty to report obligations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CFSA).
- 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.
- Always maintain confidentiality.

### **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 DIRECTORS/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the /Directors/designate.

**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 directors/designate, and all staff, students, and volunteers. Code Yellow on the Walkie Talkies.
- Search the childcare premises, including outdoor areas (e.g., hallways, washrooms, playground, outdoor classrooms, etc.).
- Ensure that remaining children are always supervised.

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

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

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

- Update the directors/designate. Call "All Clear" on Walkie Talkies.

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

- Document the incident in the daily written record.

**STEPS FOR THE DIRECTORS/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the /Directors/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 directions 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 directors/designate on site of concerns.
- Separate children who are showing symptoms of illness from other children.
- Follow CECC'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 DIRECTORS/DESIGNATE TO FOLLOW:**

See 'Steps to Follow for All Serious Occurrences' for the /directors/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 childcare 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.



