

Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten Inc
49 Allnutt Street Quirindi NSW 2343
PO Box 157
Quirindi
P: 02 6746 1894
E: admin@quirindipreschool.nsw.edu.au
ABN: 30 019 580 932



Transportation of Children

Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

Policy Statement

Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten (QPK) is committed to providing transportation that is well considered and planned to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children always.

When transportation forms a part of our service, our service will remain responsible for children during that period of transportation. This will apply when we are transporting children, or have arranged for the transportation of children, between our services premises and another location. This policy facilitates the provision and arrangement of transportation of children as part of our education and care service.

We will:

- Take specific steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- Identify and manage risks associated with:
 - Transportation between a vehicle and the service premises or other location
 - Transportation for single or regular trips
 - Transportation of children other than as part of an excursion and
 - Transport associated with excursions
- Embarking and disembarking the means of transport including how each child is accounted for on embarking and disembarking.

Children are considered to be under the care of an education and care service at the point the service is taken to assume responsibility for their care and wellbeing. At this point the National Law and National Regulations apply.

Planning Strategies

When planning for transportation staff will:

- Assess the requirements for the transportation
- Conduct a risk assessment
- Book transport
- Make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions
- Inform families of the details of the transportation including pick up and destination, objectives and outcomes, requirements, and the availability of a risk assessment
- Provide parents or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise transportation of a child, with a transportation authorisation form to complete
- Collect completed authorisation forms for each child using the transportation
- Request additional adult participation for the transportation where required
- Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen) and mobile phone to be readily available for the transportation
- Consider any additional factors in the planning of transportation for children with additional needs. Where possible, our service will uphold the right for all children to access all transport.

Regular Transportation

Regular transportation is transport by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by the service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same each time the child is transported.

An example of a change in circumstances that are substantially might be when the means of transportation route or destination(s) have altered or the provider of the service has changed.

- Our service recognises that risks apply equally during periods of regular transportation, as they do to single transportation
- Risk assessments for regular transportation must be reviewed at least every 12 months
- whenever routes change
- when destinations change
- when transport providers' change

- after any incident
- when new hazards are identified

Risk Assessment

- A transport risk assessment will always be conducted before our service transports a child/children to evaluate risks each time transportation is used (unless the transportation is 'regular transportation')
- The Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider will ensure that the risk assessment identifies and assesses the risk the transport may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst using the transport and will specify how the service will manage any risks identified.
- Once risks have been identified, they will be categorised as high, moderate, or low and management of the risks will be detailed.
- Educators and any responsible adults using the transport are aware of our service policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (regulation 97(1)(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transport.
- Before using the transport, risks are checked including the weather to assess any increases to the level of risk and whether the transport can proceed.
- A procedure for each route of travel will be created in line with the risk assessment and will outline specific educator responsibilities, including the use of strollers and safety restraints.

The risk assessment conducted will consider:

- the proposed route and duration of the transportation, including estimated time of travel between the different locations
- each of the proposed pick-up locations and destination
- the means of transport
- the purpose of the transport
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- any water hazards on the proposed route travelled and at each stop
- number of adults and children involved in the transportation

- given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required
- whether any items should be readily available during transportation (for example, a mobile phone and list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported)
- the process for entering and exiting the education and care service premises and the pickup location or destination (as required)
- procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking
- strategies for accounting for all children using the transportation, particularly during embarking and disembarking the vehicle.

Authorisation for Transportation

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that authorisation for a child to be transported is given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise transportation of a child. The authorisation will include:

- the child's name
- the reason the child is to be transported
- if the transportation is for regular transportation, a description of when the child is to be transported
- if the authorisation is not for regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported
- a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination
- the means of transport
- the period of time during which the child is to be transported
- the anticipated number of children likely to be transported
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the education and care service
- that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the education and care service.

Mandatory notifications

The Approved Provider must notify the NSW Regulatory Authority within 7 days if the service starts or ceases providing or arranging regular transportation.

QPK does not currently provide or arrange regular transportation. The following procedures will apply should regular transportation be introduced in the future.

A notification will be lodged through the NQA IT System.

- The approved provider must notify the regulatory in a service approval application, or if the service is already approved, within seven (7) days of regular transportation being provided or arranged by the service
- The approved provider must notify the regular authority within seven (7) days if the service starts or stops providing or arranging regular transportation

Transportation attendance and record keeping

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children during transportation and to comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten will maintain accurate records whenever regular transportation is provided or arranged by the service.

A Transportation Attendance Record will be completed for each transportation journey and will be maintained by the designated educator responsible for supervising children during transportation.

The Transportation Attendance Record will:

- Confirm that each child has been accounted for when embarking and disembarking the vehicle at the service premises.
- Record how each child was accounted for when embarking and disembarking the vehicle.
- Confirm that a visual inspection of the vehicle interior was completed after all children had disembarked.
- Include the date and time of transportation.
- Include the full name and signature of the educator responsible for accounting for children.
- Include the full name and signature of the educator responsible for conducting the final vehicle inspection.

Accounting for Children

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that a staff member or Nominated Supervisor, other than the driver of the vehicle, is present when children embark and disembark the vehicle at the service premises.

The designated educator will:

- Mark each child present on the Transportation Attendance Record as they enter the vehicle.
- Conduct and record a head count of children prior to departure.
- Account for each child upon arrival at the destination.
- Conduct and record a further head count before children leave the vehicle.
- Ensure children are actively supervised at all times during embarkation and disembarkation.
- Vehicle Inspection
- Following the completion of each transportation journey, the designated educator will conduct a thorough inspection of the vehicle to ensure that no child has been left behind.
- The inspection will include:
 - Checking all seating areas, including under seats.
 - Checking luggage and storage compartments where accessible.
 - Checking aisles and floor spaces.
 - Checking the rear of the vehicle and all exit points.
- Confirming the vehicle is empty before securing and locking the vehicle.
- Where possible, a second educator will verify the vehicle inspection as an additional safety measure.
- Storage of Records
- Transportation records will be stored securely and maintained in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and the service's Record Keeping and Retention Policy.
- Transportation records will be readily available for inspection by authorised officers and retained for the period required under relevant legislation.
- Review of Records
- Transportation Attendance Records will be reviewed regularly by the Nominated Supervisor to ensure compliance with service procedures and legislative requirements.

- Any discrepancies, incidents, hazards, or concerns identified through transportation records will be investigated and addressed promptly. Where necessary, risk assessments, policies, procedures and staff training will be reviewed and updated.

Staffing Arrangements

- Educators using the transportation will be no less than the number prescribed in the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and depending on the supervision requirements, may need to be higher to ensure adequate supervision.
- The number of educators will also be adequate to supervise any responsible adults who volunteer to assist with the transportation.
- A Nominated Supervisor or a staff member (other than the driver) must:
- Be present when children embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
- Account for each child when they embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
- Complete a check of the interior of the vehicle after all children left on the vehicle.
- An educator who is driving the vehicle is not counted towards educator-to-child ratios while driving
- Consideration will be given to the number of educators who have required first aid qualifications and the number of educators required to educate and care for children who remain at the service.
- Where a group of children are taken on transportation while a number of children remain at the service, at least one educator who holds the following qualifications must be in attendance at both the transportation and at the service where children are being educated and cared for, and must be immediately available in an emergency. At least:
 - staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who holds a current approved first aid qualification
 - staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training
 - staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken approved emergency asthma management training (regulation 136(1)).

- All educators attending the transportation will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (regulation 97(1)(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transportation.

Families and Volunteers

- Families will be encouraged to participate in transportation to increase the number of responsible adults and assist in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children.
- Families and volunteers cannot be counted in order to meet ratio requirements under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Family members wishing to attend will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of the service. If the responsible adult needs to bring their child's sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the responsibility provided to this adult will be adjusted accordingly and considered in the risk assessment.
- Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole charge of children (including their children) and must be supervised by an educator at all times.
- All responsible adults attending the transportation will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (regulation 97(1)(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transportation

Conducting the Transportation

- All educators, volunteers and children using the transportation will be informed of transportation timetable/ itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.
- A list of children using the transportation will be left at the service and a copy carried by the delegated responsible person.
- Items to be readily available when transporting children include:
- a suitable stocked first-aid kit including EpiPen; a list of adults involved in transportation and contact information for each
- an operating mobile phone with an appropriate telephone network or other means of communicating with the service and emergency services;

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- a list of children involved, including children's contact information, emergency contact numbers and the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service;
- children's medication, health plans and individual risk assessment and
- other items as required e.g. sunscreen, drinking cups, jackets, hats, hygiene products etc.

Record keeping and accounting for children during regular transportation includes:

- The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that records are kept for regular transportation that
- Confirm each child was accounted for when embarking and disembarking the vehicle at the service premises
- State how each was accounted for at the service premises
- State that the interior of vehicle was checked after all children have disembarked at the service premises
- The records must be made immediately and include the time, date, full name and signature of the person/s responsible for:
- Accounting for the children during embarking and disembarking of the vehicle
- Conducting the vehicle check after children have disembarked

Roles and Responsibilities

Role - Authority/Responsibility for Management Committee (Approved Provider) and Nominated Supervisor

- Assume responsibility under the National Law for the safety, health and wellbeing of all children at all times that children are in the care of the service/s.
- Ensure that any child being educated and cared for by the service is not transported by the service or in transportation arranged by the service unless written authorisation has been given.
- Ensure the records are kept for regular transportation
- Ensure that the regulatory authority is notified that your service offers, provides arranges or ceases regular transportation (regulation 168(2)(ga)) including:
- Procedures that address requirements for risk assessments (regulations 102B and 102C) and

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- Written authorisations (regulation 102D)
- Record keeping requirements (102E and 102F) o

Role - Authority/Responsibility for Nominated Supervisor Responsible Person

- Taking steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children when being transported by or on transport arranged by the service.
- Ensuring that any child being educated and cared for by the service is not transported by the service or in transportation arranged by the service unless written authorisation has been given.
- Ensure that the number of educators or responsible adults involved in the transportation of children, including when children are embarking or disembarking the vehicle, is adequate, effective and ensures active supervision.
- A nominated supervisor or a staff member (other than the driver) must:
- Be present when children embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
- Only allocating educators to attend transportation of children who understand and are confident with, the transport risk assessment and any associated policies and procedures.
- A staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) being present at the service to account for all children as they embark and disembark at the service premises and keep a record of how each child was accounted for.
- A check of the interior of the vehicle to ensure there are no children left behind
- Ensuring items to be taken on transportation are fully stocked and in date, including emergency medication
- Only using/ fitting child restraints in accordance with the National Child Restraint Laws and the mandatory standard AS/NZS 1754 Child restraint systems for use in motor vehicles
- Ensuring that the transportation means meets all safety requirements for the transport of children, insurances, including approved child restraints, fire extinguishers and emergency exits.
- Ensuring that sufficient educators are in attendance on the transportation to meet the Education and Care Services National Laws, Regulations and

supervision requirements across the service. The transport operator/driver will not be included in this ratio.

- Ensuring that service transportation is kept clean and tidy.
- Ensuring that any chartered transport companies provide written notification that the bus driver has a working with children check (or equivalent).
- Ensure that records are kept for regular transportation.

Early Childhood Educators and Nominated Supervisor

- Taking steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children when being transported by or on transport arranged by, the service.
- Following all service policies, procedures and risks assessments in relation to transportation and child protection.
- Conduct and document regular head counts as detailed in the transport risk assessment.
- Remaining responsible for all children being transported and provide particularly close attention to any children in their assigned group.
- Complete records accounting for the children embarking and disembarking the vehicle at the services premises.
- Conduct a vehicle check after children have disembarked
- Promoting a safe and secure transportation journey for children, engaging in meaningful interactions throughout.
- Maintaining items that are taken on transportation in a neat and organised fashion. Notify the responsible person of any items that need replacing and ensure the items are returned to their designated space at the conclusion of transportation, ready for their next use.
- Communicating with other staff before and during the transportation to keep children safe and implement any risk minimisation strategies.
- Ensuring relevant medical plans, risk assessments, medication and contact details for each child attending the transportation are readily available.
- Ensuring that no child is ever left unsupervised on any transportation.
- Ensuring that all safety restraints are used correctly before and during transportation.
- Removing children who are in strollers first, ensuring stroller brakes are on, before assisting other children. This is always to occur on the side of the vehicle

away from traffic and, wherever possible, in a position where road crossing is not required.

- Having their current driver's license with them at all times, if driving.
- Not using their mobile phones while directly responsible for children, other than for the purposes of the transportation or in an emergency.
- Implementing road safety activities and messages with children across the service program.
- Role modelling road safety practices at all times.

Families

- Nominating on their child's enrolment record, any persons having authority to authorise transportation of their child
- Notifying the service of their child's absence, or any changes to authorisation for transportation.
- Role modelling road safety practices, including holding their child's hand when arriving and departing the service.
- Never leaving a child unattended in a vehicle while delivering or collecting other children from the service.
- Using and fitting correct child restraints.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

It is good practice for every approved provider, nominated supervisor and educator to apply the new safety requirements for regular transportation to all periods of transportation including single trips.

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a

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family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice – Standard 1.1
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standard 2.2

Resources

- ACECQA Risk Assessment Template for Transporting Children (other than as part of an excursion): www.acecqa.gov.au/media/29841
- ACECQA Changes to Regular Transportation of Children – Commencing 1 March 2023
- www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/info_Fact_Sheet_ChangesToRegularTransportationOfChildren_March2023%20%283%29.pdf
- NSW Department of Education -Transporting Kids Safely: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/leadership/resources-library/transporting-children-safely> https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/early-childhood-education/whats-happening-in-the-early-childhood-education-sector/media/ece-resources/Safe_transportation_of_children_attending_ECEC_services_2023.pdf
- ABC Kids Crossing the Road song: <https://youtu.be/CSjbCjErf00>

Sources

- ACECQA Safe Transportation of Children: www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/Infosheet-SafeTransportationOfChildren.pdf
- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA

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- Kidsafe NSW – Child Restraints: www.kidsafensw.org/road-safety/child-restraints/
- ACCC – Child Restraints for use in motor vehicles: www.productsafety.gov.au/standards/child-restraints-for-use-in-motor-vehicles
- Centre for Road Safety – Child Car Seats: <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/children/childcarseat/index.html>
- Centre for Road Safety: <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/>
- Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 51, 165, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 4, 24, 85, 89, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102A–102F, 122, 123, 136, 158, 161, 168(2)(ga), 170, 177, 183
- Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety (WHS) Regulation 2011
- Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020 under the Education and Care Services National Law