



# Access to the centre Policy

## **Policy Overview**

Wingate Avenue Children's' Co-Operative aims to provide a safe, inclusive and most importantly, a protective environment for all children who attend the centre, while respecting the rights of all parents / guardians with custodial agreements.

The centre aims to provide an inclusive and non-bias environment to all families, children and educators, where individual cultures, beliefs and family values are upheld and supported.

Equal Opportunity principles will apply subject to the Commonwealth Government 'Priority of Access' and funding guidelines.

Access to the centre will be provided to students, members of the community, and other professionals at times where Management see appropriate.

## **Who does this Policy apply to?**

This policy applies to Families, Management, Educators and Children.

## **Policy Guidelines**

### **Key Pad Entry**

Upon enrolment, all families will be provided with a pin code for our main entrance door, ensuring only authorised people have access to the centre throughout the day.

Families should not pass this code on to anyone other than emergency contacts who will be responsible for dropping off or collecting children regularly.

The pin code will be changed annually and families will be emailed the new code.

No students, contractors or other visitors should be given the door code.

### **Priority of Access**

The Australian Government's Priority of Access Guidelines sets out three levels of priority, which all centres must adhere to when the demand of childcare exceeds supply.

Priority One: A child at risk of abuse or neglect

Priority Two: Any child who lives within the Ascot vale Housing estate.

Priority Three: A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the Activity test through centrelink.

Priority Four: Any other child.

Within these main categories, priority should also be given to the following children:

- Children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Children from families that include a disabled person
- Children from families that include an individual whose adjustable taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold or whose partner is on income support.
- Children from families with non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Children from socially isolated families
- Children from single parents.

Under the Priority of Access Guidelines, if there are no vacant places, a child who is Priority 3 may be required to vacate or adjust their days in order to provide care for a child in priority one or two level.

### **Family Access**

Our community is one of our highly valued assets at Wingate Avenue and family involvement is encouraged through a variety of aspects.

Throughout the year, we hold several fundraisers, working bees and special events that we encourage you to come along to.

It is asked that family members communicate with educators and management about suitable times to visit throughout the day to ensure routine times are not disrupted.

Parents can bring family members along to join in with the children's program throughout the year and to additional celebrations the centre may hold.

### **Children with Additional Needs**

The curriculum at Wingate Avenue is inclusive of all children, regardless of their ability or background. Where required, the Director will contact the regional Inclusion Support Agency (ISA) to organise a visit from an Inclusion Support Facilitator (ISF). The ISF will consult with educators to facilitate access for the child into the centre. If an ISF has already been introduced to the centre, the Director may contact them directly.

Children assessed by the ISF may be eligible for additional support available through KU Children's Services, the National Provider of the Australian Government's Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) Program.

### **Family Court Orders**

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is bound by the rulings of Family Court orders, family violence-related orders, child protection orders and bail orders.

Without the evidence of a Family Court Order or similar, the Centre is unable to deny or prevent access to any child by a guardian who can show they are the natural parent of said child.

Whilst all steps will be taken to ensure the identity of the person, our staff have no legal right to prevent the removal of the child from the Centre by a natural parent who can provide documentary evidence and as such it is the responsibility of parents to provide our Centre with any Family Court Orders affecting custody.

Wingate Avenue will record and keep on record all Family Court Orders and Rulings regarding access to children.

- Such orders and rulings must be provided in writing to the Centre as soon as possible after their recording in the Court Register
- The Centre will keep a list of custodial orders and rulings in a confidential place for access by staff only in order to ascertain custodial access days/times/persons
- Police will be notified in the first instance should a non-custodial guardian arrive to collect a child. The custodial guardian will be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so and in consideration of the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders, and the overall security of the Centre.
- Where threat of aggressive or unlawful behaviour is reasonably expected or a previous record of such behaviour by a non-custodial parent is known;
- Police may be notified of the danger to alert them of a possible immediate assistance

### **Visitor Access**

There will be times throughout the year when visitors may be invited to partake or run experiences with the children.

These may include: incursions, medical visitors, community members who are providing an experience or sharing their knowledge.

Visitors will be required to sign in upon arriving and leaving the centre and to provide their working with

children card where applicable.  
At no time will visitors be unsupervised.

### **Student access and Placement**

Wingate Avenue is committed to supporting the training of students, teachers and early childhood employees, accepting students from high schools, TAFE, University and other tertiary training organisations.

The placement of students will be at the discretion of the Director and appropriate supervision will be maintained at all times.

All students will be required to provide proof of a current Working with Childrens Check prior to commencement.

It is expected that educators work together to role model, support and encourage positive interactions and practices at all times.

### **Professional Access**

Professional access to the centre will be at the discretion of the Director and, if involving the children, with the parent's/guardian's written consent. The exemption to this is in regards to children at risk.

- Professionals or officials that may request access are:
  - Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
  - Department of Education, Employment and Workplace *Relations*
  - Department of Human Services Child Protection Officers
  - Police Officers
  - Department of Health Inspectors

### **Refusal of Access**

Where an educator or members of staff have serious doubts as to whether a person collecting a child is fit to have a child released into their care, possibly because they are adversely affected by alcohol, drugs, etc., the following procedure should be followed:

- a) Staff will raise the issue with the person concerned
- b) Staff will give that person reasons for the staff's concern
- c) Staff will suggest that the person does not (where applicable) drive and offer them the choice of calling a friend to collect both the child and the person or calling a taxi
- d) Where the person threatens to become violent and there is concern for the safety to staff or children then staff should
  - ii Let them go
  - iii Obtain licence number of the vehicle and direction of travel (where applicable)
  - iiii Phone the police immediately on 0-000 and give details.
  - iiv Decide if it is necessary to make a notification to Office of Children, Youth & Family Services.

Refer to Child Protection Policy Reference

Date created	2 <sup>nd</sup> of January 2019
Last reviewed	7 <sup>th</sup> of February, 2022
Next review due	March 2023
Relevant Policies	Enrolment Policy Child Protection Policy Privacy Policy Delivery & Collection of children
Relevant Legislation	<p><b>Education and Care Services National Law 2011</b></p> <p>167 Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards</p> <p>170 Offence relating to unauthorised persons on education and care service premises</p> <p>171 Offence relating to direction to exclude inappropriate persons from education and care service premises</p> <p>189 Emergency removal of children</p> <p>200 Powers of entry to business premises</p> <p><b>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</b></p> <p>84 Awareness of child protection law</p> <p>99 Children leaving the education and care service premises</p> <p>149 Volunteers and students</p> <p>157 Access for parents</p> <p><b>National Quality Standards</b></p> <p>2.2.1 - At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazards</p> <p>6.2.2: Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.</p> <p>7.1.2 – Management Systems: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.</p>