

Early Learning

Road Safety and Safe Travel (Children) Policy

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- ensuring children are adequately supervised to protect their wellbeing and safety during any excursion or journey from or to the service, family day care home/venue that involves travel in a vehicle organised by the service;
- keeping children safe while travelling as pedestrians, cyclists or passengers in a vehicle;
- providing appropriate information to parents/guardians about vehicles and road safety education and practice;
- providing an educational program that encompasses educating children in road safety.

Executive Summary

Obligations regarding the safe travel of children are dependent upon whether the organised arrangements are part of the provision of the education and care of the children or separate from the provision of education and care for children and the operation of the service, family day care home/venue. The potential for harm is greater outside of the safety of the education and care environment and risks must be assessed upon whether children travel by service bus, school bus, hire bus, public transport or travelling in a family day care educator's private vehicle, a taxi or Uber.

Transport used for any excursion, the delivery and collection of children, or a regular outing must meet travel safety standards. This means that all vehicles must be registered, insured, maintained, and have restraints approved by the Roads and Traffic Authority. Any driver of a vehicle must have a current approved license. All adults must have a current Working with Children Check. Proper restraint systems are to be used in vehicles according to current Australian Standards and law of each jurisdiction.

Taxis, public buses, and trams are exempt from supplying car seats; therefore, children are not required to be seated in a car seat when travelling by taxi, tram or bus. However, all passengers including children must wear seatbelts if they are fitted. If booking a taxi or bus for an excursion, request one that can supply seatbelts and/or car seats.

Educators are expected to follow appropriate procedures when children are transported by bus, public transport or family day care educator's private vehicle to ensure safety at all times, which includes undertaking regular head counts/identity checks and cross-checking against the current attendance record to ensure no child is left behind. Children are never to be left unattended in any vehicle. Supervision and communication are key strategies used by educators to ensure smooth, safe and enjoyable travel arrangements for all.

Educators and volunteers are required to understand their roles and responsibilities when a parent or authorised nominee fails to collect a child, after arriving at their destination, or a child is confirmed missing. A documented emergency plan that minimises risks, is essential in the unexpected instance of a vehicle breakdown or crash, or transport-related injury involving children, staff or volunteers. All adults must understand their roles and responsibilities at these times.

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Current Environmental Context

Road safety education can help to reduce the risk of serious injury and death among young children by assisting them to develop skills, knowledge and behaviour about the safe use of roads.

As the risks are greater when children travel outside of the service, family day care home/venue environment, a final risk assessment will be required on the day of travel. Unforeseen and or unexpected circumstances on the day may include;

- unexpected weather changes, dynamic of group, type of bus, change in collection and/or drop off points and destination conditions.

As per Uniting Protocol for travel during adverse weather conditions including fire and flood, **No travel is permitted** to, or through, or to any area with an active “Watch and Act”, “Evacuate” or “Emergency Warning”. Click [CFA warnings & restrictions](#) or [TFS Online \(fire.tas.gov.au\)](https://www.fire.tas.gov.au) to access specific district information and warnings.

Services have a duty of care to develop appropriate procedures to guide staff to address situations where a child is observed to be at risk while being transported to or from the early childhood service. This may include instances where a child is observed to be:

- travelling unrestrained
- travelling in an inappropriate restraint
- riding a bicycle or wheeled toy without a helmet
- instances where a parent/guardian is in an unfit state to drive due to intoxication or impairment

When children are travelling as part of the service for any reason, educators must ensure that all vehicles (other than public transport) used to transport children have seatbelts fitted and/or child restraints that are suitable for a child’s age/size and that these are properly adjusted, fastened and correctly used. The number of children that can be safely transported by a vehicle should not be exceeded.

To ensure the safety of children while travelling, it is essential that all staff; educators, family day care educator assistants and volunteers, involved, communicate regularly and acknowledge this communication. For example, when undertaking headcounts, ensure everyone knows exactly how many children are accounted for and the identity of each and every child. Staff are to ensure a charged and functioning mobile communicating device is taken on the journey.

Where transport is provided that is not directly part of the education and care service, a parent or authorised nominee named in the child’s enrolment record must provide to the service written authorisation to allow the child to leave the education and care service premises.

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Attachment 6a: Attachment 6a – Responsibilities for-Approved Provider, Responsible person, Educators and Parents

Attachment 6b: Best Practice – Quality Area 2 (and 6)

Attachment 6c: Children travelling by school bus

Attachment 6d: Children travelling by Family Day Care educator private vehicle

Attachment 6e: Walking children from one program to another on site

Attachment 6f: National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education

Attachment 6g: Sample procedure when a child is observed to be at risk while being transported to or from an early childhood premises

Forms can be found on [Click here](#)

Form 6.1 School bus transportation authorisation

Form 6.2 Service bus list

Form 6.3 Transporting Children-Risk Assessment template-(other than as part of an excursion)

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Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Uniting Child Safety Policy – Uniting adopts the Uniting Church Australia National Child Safety Policy Framework, 2019 and the principles of this Policy Framework

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations policy
- Excursion, Regular Outing and Service events policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness policy
- Delivery and Collection policy
- Excursion, Regular Outing and Service Event policy
- Supervision of Children policy
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 165, 167, 169, 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 201: Regulation 99, 102B, 102C, 102D, 123, 124, 126, 127, 136, 158, 168, 172
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Children's Services amendment Act 2019
- Children's Services Regulations 2020
- Road Safety Education Victoria: <http://www.roadsafetyeducation.vic.gov.au/teaching-resources/early-childhood> Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Vic)
 - Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Vic)
 - Transportation of Children with Additional Needs: www.rch.org.au/tocan
 - Car Seats Save Lives: www.carseatssavelives.com.au
- National Child Restraint Best practice guidelines www.neura.edu.au/crs-guidelines/
- School Bus Program - www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport
- Starting Out Safely: <http://childroadsafety.org.au/>
- Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 (0-12years), 2014. S4.7, 4.8
- Vic Roads <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/vehicle-safety/child-restraints/child-restraint-evaluation-program>
- Department of State Growth Transport – Tasmanian road rules https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/road_safety_and_rules/road_rules

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 05 October 2021

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by: 05 October 2022

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Attachment 6a – Responsibilities for

Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a child is not transported without prior written authorisation by the parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record, and that the authorisation includes all details required under Regulation 102D
- Ensuring the risk assessment (refer to Glossary) identifies and assesses the risks, specifies how these will be managed and/or minimised, and includes all details required by Regulation 102B, 102C
- Ensuring the provision of road safety education, based on the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education (Attachment 1).
- Ensuring that all children attending the service are included in road safety education.
- Ensuring access of educators and staff to regular professional development/training in road safety and ensuring they are kept up to date with current legislation,
- Ensuring the availability (in good condition) and use of bicycle helmets which meet Australian/New Zealand Standard 2063 for bicycles and wheeled toys (refer to Glossary).
- Ensuring the provision of location-specific road safety information (e.g. details about where to park safely when delivering and collecting children and local area speed limits etc.) to parents/guardians and visitors.
- Ensuring the provision of general road safety information about transporting children to and from the service (which might include using the 'safety door' (the rear kerbside door), driveway safety, child restraint information and role modelling safe road use) to parents/guardians.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians have access to this policy and its attachments.
- All services are to request a bus with fitted seat belts. Where buses with fitted seat belts are hired, all children, educators and volunteers must have the seat belts secured correctly for the entire trip
- Ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed in the event of a vehicle crash or transport-related injury involving any children, staff or volunteers from the service (refer to Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy).
- Establishing agreed procedures for staff to follow where a child is observed being transported to or from the premises in an unsafe manner.

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Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day to Day Charge is responsible for:

- Ensuring the embedding in the curriculum of Road safety education, based on the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education. [Click here](#)
- Working with teachers and educators to develop appropriate strategies to ensure all children attending the service are included in road safety education
- Ensuring that a child is not transported without prior written authorisation by the parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record, and that the authorisation includes all details required under Regulation 102D
- Ensuring the risk assessment (refer to *glossary*) identifies and assesses the risks, specifies how these will be managed and/or minimised, and includes all details required by Regulation 102B, 102C
- Requesting a bus with fitted seat belts. Where buses with fitted seat belts are hired all children, educators and volunteers must have the seat belts secured correctly for the entire trip
- Organising access of teachers, educators and staff to regular professional development/training in road safety and are kept up to date with current legislation, regulations, rules, standards and best practice information.
- Providing teachers and educators with access to a broad range of road safety education resources
- Providing (in good condition) and use of bicycle helmets which meet Australian/New Zealand Standard 2063 for bicycles and wheeled toys.
- Monitoring the correct use of bicycle helmets whenever bicycles or wheeled toys are used.
- Ensuring the provision of location-specific road safety information (e.g. details about where to park safely when delivering and collecting children and local area speed limits etc.) to parents/guardians and visitors.
- Ensuring the provision of general road safety information about transporting children to and from the service (which might include using the 'safety door' (the rear kerbside door), driveway safety, child restraint information and role modelling safe road use) to parents/guardians
- Ensuring that teachers and educators provide parents/guardians with information about road safety.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians have access to this policy and its attachments.
- Ensuring when possible that buses hired for use on excursions have fitted seatbelts for use by all children, staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that teachers and educators understand and follow appropriate procedures in the event of a vehicle crash or transport-related injury involving any children, staff or volunteers from the service (refer to Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy).
- Ensuring that teachers and educators understand and follow the service's procedures where a child is observed being transported to or from the premises in an unsafe manner.
- Implementing the services agreed procedures when notified by a teacher or educator regarding their observation of children being transported in an unsafe manner.
- Ensure children are educated about positive safety behaviours including Road Safety

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Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Providing road safety education, based on the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education.
- Including all children attending the service in road safety education.
- Participating in regular professional development/training in road safety to keep up to date with current legislation, regulations, rules, standards and best practice information.
- Using a broad range of resources to support the delivery of road safety education.
- Providing bicycle helmets which meet Australian/New Zealand Standard 2063 and ensuring that that they are correctly fitted where bicycles or wheeled toys (refer to Attachment 1, Glossary) are used.
- Providing parents/guardians and visitors with location-specific road safety information.
- Providing parents/guardians with information about road safety and actively communicating this information to families.
- Providing parents/ guardians with access to this policy and its attachments and actively communicating this information to families.
- Requesting a bus with fitted seat belts. Where buses with fitted seat belts are hired all children, educators and volunteers must have the seat belts secured correctly for the entire trip
- Following appropriate procedures in the event of a vehicle crash or transport-related injury involving any children, staff or volunteers from the service (refer to Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy), including notifying the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider as soon as possible after the event.
- Implementing the service's agreed procedures where a child is observed being transported to or from the premises in an unsafe manner.

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Attachment 6b - Best Practice - Quality Area 2 (and 6)

Why is road safety education important?

Road safety education can help to reduce the risk of serious injury and death among young children by assisting them to develop skills, knowledge and behaviour about the safe use of roads.

- Working collaboratively with families to help children become safe and responsible road users aligns with the learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).
- Volunteers and students, while at the service, are also responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

How does road trauma affect young people?

- Road trauma is one of the leading causes of death among young Australians. Young children are at risk as passengers in motor vehicles, as pedestrians and as cyclists. They are particularly vulnerable due to:
 - their small size and changing needs as they grow
 - their cognitive and perceptual skills are still developing.
 - what is the early childhood service duty of care obligation?
 - under duty of care obligations, services must develop appropriate procedures to guide staff to address situations where a child is observed to be at risk while being transported to or from the early childhood service.
- This may include instances where a child is observed to be:
 - travelling unrestrained
 - travelling in an inappropriate restraint
 - riding a bicycle or wheeled toy without a helmet
 - instances where a parent/guardian is in an unfit state to drive due to intoxication or impairment

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Attachment 6c: Children travelling by school bus

When children are travelling to or from the service by school bus, undertake the following procedures to ensure that children are safe and that no child is left behind.

- Written authorisation to allow the children to leave the service must be provided. Ensure parents or authorised nominees (refer to Glossary) have completed and signed a form notifying the service that the child will be travelling by school bus. This form is to be kept with the child's enrolment record and a copy provided to the coordinating school.
- Compile a bus list with names of all children travelling to or from the service by school bus and the days they will be travelling. This list should also include emergency contact details for each child and any travel requirements (e.g. medical management action plan and medication, child restraint) and be kept up to date with daily changes recorded (e.g. parents notifying child's absence).
- Provide a copy of the school bus list to the coordinating school. The coordinating school will provide a list to the bus company/bus driver. *(Refer form 6.2-Service bus list)*
- Educator to mark children off the bus list as they are collected by parents/authorised school staff.
- Parents or authorised nominee (authorised school staff/educator) to sign child off the bus.
- After the final stop, the educator and bus driver check the bus and the bus list to ensure that no children remain on the bus before returning to the service.

Failure to collect

If a child is not collected by their parents or authorised nominee (refer to *Glossary*) within 15 minutes of arriving at their destination:

1. Phone parent or authorised nominee.
2. If unable to reach parent/authorised nominee notify the service and continue on the bus run taking the child with you.
3. At the end of the run return to the service with the child and follow **Procedures for the late collection of children** *(refer to Attachment 6f)*

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Attachment 6d: Children travelling by Family Day Care educator private vehicle

- Ensuring parents/guardians have access to this policy and that its contents are communicated to them.
- Ensure a transport risk assessment is conducted before a child/ren are transported (refer to form 6.3) A risk Assessment is only required to be completed at least once for a 12 month period if it is a regular transportation.
- Ensuring that all Family Day Care authorised drivers (refer to *Glossary*) hold a current full Australian Drivers Licence.
- Ensuring vehicles are kept locked and inaccessible to children when not being transported.
- Ensuring there are no loose or sharp objects inside the car that could cause injury if an accident occurs. Any goods carried in a vehicle are to be stored safely below the level of the rear seat.
- Ensuring mobile phones are not used whilst driving at any time.
- Assessing and documenting how many children can be transported in an educator/authorised driver's vehicle.
- Ensuring that educators follow appropriate procedures in the event of a vehicle crash or transport-related injury involving Family Day Care children or staff (refer to *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*).
- Maintaining a register of vehicles and authorised drivers that includes motor vehicle registration, insurance and licence details, and details of any driving offences, and updating this annually or more frequently as required.
- Ensuring that educators/drivers are aware that they are not to leave children unattended in a vehicle at any time, including when refuelling.
- Ensuring that children are not transported in additional/dickie seats (refer to *Glossary*) due to safety concerns with these types of seats in the event of a crash.
- Ensuring that child restraints and booster seats, with at least a four-star crash protection rating as determined by the Child Restraint Evaluation Program (CREP) (refer to *Glossary*), are used by the Family Day Care service. Booster cushions (refer to *Glossary*) do not meet the Australian/New Zealand Child Restraint Standard AS/NZ 1754 2010, 2013 and are no longer allowed to be manufactured in Australia.
- Ensuring that educators use child restraints and booster seats in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensuring that child restraint accessories, including child safety harnesses (refer to *Glossary*), are not used unless prescribed by a health professional such as an occupational therapist.
- Ensuring that 'type of restraint' is included on all excursion authorisation forms under *Method of transport to be used for the excursion*.

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- Ensuring that children under the age of 12 years do not travel in the front seat of a vehicle if there are rear seats available, due to the increased risk of injury to child passengers in the event of a crash. If all rear seats are being used by children aged under 7 years, children aged 4 years to under 7 years are permitted to travel in the front seat, provided they use a booster seat. (If the car has frontal air bags, the seat should be moved back as far as possible.) If a child under 12 years needs to travel in the front seat, parents/guardians must provide informed consent.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians of children with disabilities or medical conditions are aware that a health professional, such as an occupational therapist, can prescribe a child restraint appropriate for their child's needs, and may be able to provide guidance on accessing and using special restraints.
- Ensuring that educators, coordinators, authorised drivers, Family Day Care educator assistants and staff members receive training on how to correctly install and use child restraints and booster seats, and professional development on other road safety topics.
- Ensuring that educators check that child restraints and booster seats are safe, clean and in good repair, and are no more than ten years old.
- Ensuring that any child restraint that is involved in a crash is replaced.
- Ensuring that bicycle helmets are available and fitted correctly when bicycles or wheeled toys are used.
- Ensuring that bicycle helmets are in good condition and meet the Australian/New Zealand Standard 2063 (refer to *Legislation and standards*).
- Procedure for vehicle accident or breakdown or adverse weather conditions – fire and flood

In the case of when a child is observed to be at risk of harm while being transported to or from a Family Day Care premise

Service providers have a duty of care to ensure the safety of children is paramount. Service providers must also comply with their obligations under state or territory child protection laws.

Where a parent/guardian or authorised nominee is observed not using a child restraint, using the wrong child restraint, using a child restraint inappropriately or engaging in other unsafe behaviours such as parking illegally or not using a bicycle helmet, the Family Day Care educator should:

- Talk with the parent/guardian/authorised nominee about the importance of safe transport procedures, including the correct use of child restraints and/or relevant road safety behaviours.
- Provide/refer the parent/guardian/authorised nominee to relevant information regarding safe transport.
- Provide the parent/guardian/authorised nominee with a copy of this policy.
- Offer/provide assistance to the parent/guardian/authorised nominee with the choice/purchase/installation/fitment of the correct restraint or bicycle helmet for their child.

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If the parent/guardian or authorised nominee persists with unsafe behaviours, the Family Day Care educator must notify the service coordinator, who should:

- Contact the parent/guardian/authorised nominee directly and discuss the importance of child restraint use and/or safe road user behaviour, including legal requirements and implications.
- Follow up with the parent/guardian/authorised nominee, where required, to ensure that they have the appropriate restraint for their child and that it is being used correctly.

If a parent/guardian or authorised nominee appears to be impaired or intoxicated when arriving to collect their child, the Family Day Care educator should:

- Encourage the parent/guardian or authorised nominee to use an alternative form of transport or contact another authorised person to collect the child. If the parent/guardian or authorised nominee is not willing to use an alternative form of transport, the educator cannot prevent the parent/guardian or authorised nominee from taking the child.
- Notify the police and/or child protection authorities immediately if the educator is of the opinion that the child may not be safe in the care of the parent/guardian or authorised nominee.

Attachment 6e – Walking children from one program to another on the same site (OSHC and school)

All services hold a duty of care for children during transition periods between school and education and care services.

Risk mitigation strategies are to be developed and implemented, to ensure the safety of all children during the transition between school & OSHC, both of a morning but more substantially of an afternoon.

- Work in collaboration with the school to ensure children are accounted for during the transition between programs.
- If a child does not arrive at before school hours care, contact the parents to confirm that the child will not be attending that morning.
- When the educators from the other program (school) deliver the children to the after-school hours program, confirm that all children booked in on that day are present. If not, request confirmation from the educator of the program (school) that the child did not attend school and the parent notified the program (school) to advise of the child's absence on that day.
- Communicate with parents the importance of clear and timely communication when a child will not be attending a booked session of outside school hours care
- Communicate with parents the importance of older children not taking an alternative option to OSHC (going home with a friend or going to a friend's house), unless authorised by the parents and the OSHC program has been notified of the change.

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Attachment 6f: National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education

The *National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education* have been developed by early childhood education and road safety experts across Australia and New Zealand. The eight national practices are based on research and are aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework.

The national practices guide early childhood educators and policy makers to develop, implement and evaluate evidence-based road safety programs that support children's and families learning about road safety. Refer to:

<http://www.roadsafetyeducation.vic.gov.au/resources/early-childhood>
<https://www.rsac.tas.gov.au/roadsafekids/teachers/>

Holistic approaches

Recognise that children's learning is integrated and interconnected when making curriculum decisions about road safety education.

Responsiveness to children

Deliver road safety education which is responsive to individual children and extends children's strengths, knowledge and interests.

Learning through play

Through play-based learning seek opportunities to address road safety in a way that expands children's thinking and encourages problem solving.

Intentional teaching

Engage in intentional teaching which extends and expands children's learning about road safety.

Learning environments

Provide opportunities in the learning environment, including the local community, for safe and meaningful interaction with children, parents, and carers about road safety.

Cultural competence

Implement road safety education that is culturally relevant for the diversity of children, their families and the community.

Continuity of learning and transitions

Use the opportunity of transitions, in active partnership with children, families and the local community, for road safety education.

Assessment for learning

Together with children and families, reflect on each child's learning and application of road safety to plan for future learning.

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Attachment 6g: Sample procedure when a child is observed to be at risk while being transported to or from an early childhood premises

Service providers have a duty of care to ensure the safety of children is paramount. Service providers must also comply with their obligations under state or territory child protection laws.

Where a parent/guardian or authorised nominee (refer to *glossary*) is observed not using a child restraint, using the wrong child restraint, using a child restraint inappropriately or engaging in other unsafe behaviours such as parking illegally or not using a bicycle helmet, the **early childhood educator should:**

- talk with the parent/guardian/authorised nominee about the importance of safe transport procedures, including the correct use of child restraints and/or relevant road safety behaviours
- provide/refer the parent/guardian/authorised nominee to relevant information regarding safe transport
- inform the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider (where relevant).

If the parent/guardian or authorised nominee persists with unsafe road use behaviours, the early childhood educator must notify the **Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, who should:**

- contact the parent/guardian/authorised nominee directly and discuss the importance of child restraint use and/or safe road user behaviour, including legal requirements and implications
- provide the parent/guardian/authorised nominee with a copy of the *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- offer/provide assistance to the parent/guardian/authorised nominee with the choice/purchase/installation/fitment of the correct restraint or bicycle helmet for their child
- follow up with the parent/guardian/authorised nominee, where required, to ensure that they have the most appropriate restraint for their child and that it is being used correctly.

If a parent/guardian or authorised nominee appears to be impaired or intoxicated when arriving to collect their child, the **early childhood educator should:**

- encourage the parent/guardian or authorised nominee to use an alternative form of transport or contact another authorised person to collect the child. If the parent/guardian or authorised nominee is not willing to use an alternative form of transport, the educator cannot prevent the parent/guardian or authorised nominee from taking the child
- notify the police and/or child protection authorities immediately if the educator is of the opinion that the child may not be safe in the care of the parent/guardian or authorised nominee.

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