



BABYSITTING POLICY

1. POLICY PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Given that children and young people in care may have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, or a combination of all three, it is crucial that Anglicare Victoria put in place practices that ensure their safety. Foster carers act as 'public parents' and as such are required to comply with requirements and legislation. Carers should be supported as much as possible to enable them to comply with these requirements.

DHS guidelines and the *Working With Children Act 2005*: Section 9 requires that anyone acting as a regular babysitter for children and young people in out of home care need to undergo a Working With Children Check. In addition, if a babysitter is organised through Anglicare Victoria as part of a volunteer program they will need to undergo a WWCC. The Check is different to Police Checks and does not replace them. Staff should ensure they are familiar with the requirements and are able to convey them to carers using babysitters. Occasional babysitters are not required to have a Working With Children Check (WWCC).

The Anglican Church of Australia is opposed to violence. It considers that 'non-violent forms of discipline [is] a means of promoting positive family relationships and ensuring the safety and welfare of children' (2006:6). In view of this, Anglicare Victoria should be satisfied that any babysitters engaged by carers or staff do not use corporal punishment or any type of behaviour management which may have a negative impact upon the physical or emotional well being of children and young people in our care.

2. DEFINITIONS

Babysitter refers to anyone providing supervision and / or care of children and young people on behalf of the usual carer.

Carer refers to a trained, accredited Anglicare Victoria foster parent.

Care of a child or young person may include supervising their play, providing meals and / or bathing them and taking all reasonable action to ensure their safety, health, development, learning and well-being.

Police checks are obtained from the Victorian Police and consist of information of a criminal nature recorded against an individual, including all criminal offences, pending changes (serious) and outstanding warrants within Victoria. The Police Certificate discloses records up to the day it is issued.

Safety assessment refers to the carer and agency worker finding out and approving the following: age appropriate supervision, address / contact number where a child will be, household arrangements, prior knowledge of the family and times of collection / drop off of the child.

Supervision means that meals, bathing or similar care activities are usually not undertaken but the babysitter does monitor the safety and well being of the child or young person under their supervision and intervene if a risk is perceived.

Working With Children Check (WWC Check) is obtained from the Department of Justice and affects many people in the Victorian Community. People (over the age of 18yrs) who

work or volunteer with children, and employers, agencies and volunteer organisations that employ people in child related work are most directly affected. Parents and other guardians who engage people to work with children (for example, private tutors) may also request to see a person's WWC Check.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 Who can babysit?

Only people over the age of 18, who are considered to be responsible, with skills relevant to the safe supervision of children and young people within a child appropriate care environment. The exception to this age is a carer's own child who may be required to care for the child or young person in care from time to time (see section 3.2)

If the babysitting is required on a regular basis, it should be arranged via the Anglicare Victoria worker and a police check and WWCC will need to be undertaken. It is advisable that carers identify a number of people who can act as their support network and can be assessed and police checked as required.

If the carer is involved in an emergency situation where supervision of the children or young people in their care is required, contact should be made with their Anglicare Victoria worker or the Team Leader rather than risk non compliance with these babysitting guidelines.

3.2 Can the Carer's own children babysit?

Carers should be advised that Anglicare Victoria does not endorse the use of the carer's children acting as babysitters if they are under the age of 18.

The exception to this is a carers' child who is no younger than 16yrs of age and who is considered responsible, with skills relevant to the safe supervision of children and young people and where – on the odd occasion - the carer's child baby sits for a short period eg. Whilst the carer attends an appointment, does the grocery shopping or needs to go out for less than 2 hours. In these situations, Anglicare Victoria expects that the carer will discuss this with their foster care case worker prior to the event. This discussion only needs to occur initially where the foster care case worker will document this discussion and agreement in the carer file.

If the carer's children and over 18 years of age they are to be police checked and assessed as appropriate babysitters if they are to supervise children on a regular basis.

3.3 What are the requirements for babysitters?

Babysitters should demonstrate a positive approach to behaviour management and agree not to use corporal punishment of any kind on children and young people under their supervision.

Babysitters should be known to the carer and of responsible disposition. Babysitters should be informed that the child or young person under their supervision is in care and the number of the carer to contact should the need arise.

3.4 Do babysitters need to be police checked?

All babysitters need to be police checked in line with DHS guidelines. There are some social situations in which the other adults present do not need to be police checked. See the table below for further detail.

| Common Scenario | Standard | Advise CP |
|--|--|-----------|
| Having a sleepover at a friend's house | No Police check if carer uses DHS guidelines and makes a judgement. Undertake safety assessment | Yes |

| Common Scenario | Standard | Advise CP |
|--|---|-----------|
| Going to a friend's house for a play after school as a one-off | No Police check Undertake safety assessment | No |
| Going to a friend's house for a play after school on a regular basis | No Police check Undertake safety assessment | No |
| Going to a birthday party at a friend's house | No Police check Undertake safety assessment | No |
| Having private tuition, eg school work or music (one on one) | Police check In the absence of VIT registration, a WWCC is required. | Yes |
| Being collected from school by someone else | No Police check Undertake safety assessment | No |
| Going out with another family, eg to the movies | No Police check Undertake safety assessment | No |
| Participate in group coaching sessions eg basketball | WWC Check required. Carer to check that this has been completed. Undertake safety assessment | Yes |
| Having a babysitter as a one off | No Police check required as per DHS guidelines. Carer makes a judgement as a reasonable parent. Undertake safety assessment | Yes |
| Having a babysitter on a regular basis | Police check WWCC required | Yes |
| Child being cared for by another adult for a period of time | Police check Undertake safety assessment | Yes |
| A relative / friend of the carer coming to stay for one or more nights | No Police check required if carer is present. Undertake safety assessment | Yes |
| Going on a holiday with carer family and another family | No Police check required is carer is present during the holiday. Undertake safety assessment | Yes |

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

For further information see:

- Anglican Church of Australia – Professional Standards Commission Preliminary Report “Corporal Punishment of Children” 2006.
- Working with Children Act 2005.
- Anglicare Victoria 2005 Police Check Policy.
- www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren
- www.police.vic.gov.au

This policy becomes effective as at: 10 August 2007

This policy was last amended: 11 July 2013

This policy is due to be reviewed: 11 July 2016

Any queries about this policy or related procedures should be directed to:

General Manager, Placement and Support