



Vulnerable Children - Children on Interim Accommodation Orders placed in the care of the RCH.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to provide instructions regarding the steps for responding when Child Protection practitioners seek to place babies, children and young people on Interim Accommodation Orders placing them in the care of the RCH.

This Procedure sets out responsibilities in relation to care and accommodation of these children, communications between RCH staff and communications between RCH staff and Child Protection, DHS.

This Procedure applies to all RCH staff on all occasions when a child is subject to an Interim Accommodation Order in the care of the RCH.

2. Definition of terms

An Interim Accommodation order is an order issued by the Children's Court of Victoria stating where a child must reside until the next court date. Such orders are made when serious concerns exist about the child's safety or wellbeing.

Interim Accommodation Orders usually place the child in the care of a named person or a foster care agency. In some circumstances when the child is admitted to RCH, an Interim Accommodation Order may be made placing the child in the care of RCH.

Several conditions may apply to Interim Accommodation Orders, for example preventing named parties from having contact with the child.

When a child is subject to an Interim Accommodation Order, the child's parents remain legal guardians. Parents retain their rights to receive information about the child's care and provide consent to medical treatment.

3. Procedure

As a tertiary paediatric hospital RCH treats patients with complex medical needs. Children not requiring specialist tertiary

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Author / Reviewer	Professor Colin Robertson Chief of Medicine RCH Executive Sarah Connolly Senior Social Worker Social Work Dr Anne Smith Director Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service RCH
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care should be admitted to their local hospital.

When DHS or the Victorian Children's Court requests that a child be placed at RCH on an Interim Accommodation Order, staff will refer to the Social Work Department.

Where the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, staff will also refer to Wadja Aboriginal Family Place.

No order should be made placing a child in RCH care without a signed 'Statement of Placement Availability' from RCH. This Procedure sets out the process whereby this written agreement is prepared and provided to Child Protection in support of the Court Order application.

4. Responsibility

When a Social Worker becomes aware that Child Protection intends to obtain an IAO to the RCH, they must advise the Child Protection Practitioner that the order cannot extend beyond the estimated discharge date and that he/she cannot apply for the order until they have written agreement from RCH.

The Social Worker will consult with the child's bedcard Consultant to determine the child's expected discharge date.

The Social Worker will then contact the RCH Executive Office with;

- The child's details;
- The name of child's treating consultant;
- The current prognosis and estimated discharge date;
- A completed 'Statement of Placement Availability'.

The Social Worker will then liaise with the appropriate Executive Director to obtain a signature on the Statement of Placement Availability form. This Executive Director will usually be the Executive Director of Clinical Operations, Executive Director of Nursing Services or Executive Director of Medical Services.

The Social Worker will then liaise with the Child Protection Practitioner to ensure that he/she understands that Child Protection must not apply for an order exceeding the date on the Form 13. The Social Worker will provide a copy of the signed Statement of Placement Availability to Child Protection.

Child Protection will provide a copy of the Interim Accommodation Order to the Social Worker.

The Social Worker will;

- Place the Interim Accommodation Order in the child's medical record.
- Document discussions with Child Protection and the treating Consultant about the child's progress and expected discharge date in the child's medical record.

As soon as the child is medically ready for discharge, responsibility for finding appropriate placement lies with DHS Child Protection services.

When an inpatient of RCH is subject to an Interim Accommodation Order and DHS appears unable to find a suitable placement, the Social Worker will notify the responsible RCH Executive Director and Nursing Hospital Manager in a timely manner.

RCH Executive will then liaise with DHS Child Protection managers to ensure appropriate placement is identified in advance of the child's discharge date. This is an escalation process and does not replace usual clinical management of care.

See also Memorandum of Understanding between RCH and DHS Child Protection (Section 12: Dispute Resolution)

5. Related procedures

Memorandum of Understanding between RCH and DHS Child Protection - Procedure http://ww2.rch.org.au/policy_rch/index.cfm?doc_id=12296

6. Related policies

This document should be read in conjunction with the RCH Vulnerable Children Policy which details the responsibilities of all staff of The Royal Children's Hospital in relation to children for whom there is concern about abuse.

7. Related legislation

[Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.](#)

8. References

Memorandum of Understanding between RCH and DHS Child Protection

9. Further information

Contact RCH Social Work Department <http://www.rch.org.au/socialwork/>

See Department of Human Services website <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/child-protection>

See further information on Interim Accommodation Orders - DHS website <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/interim-accommodation-order>

A .pdf of the form below is available for download by clicking [here](#).

(Sections 263(1)(f), 263(1)(g))

STATEMENT OF PLACEMENT AVAILABILITY

Court Ref.-

Name of Child - *Male/*Female

Date of Birth -

Address -

I, _____ *being the/*on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of The Royal Children's Hospital state that there is a bed available

for _____ at The Royal Children's Hospital until _____ [insert date] or such earlier time as *she/*he is able to be discharged on

medical grounds.

Date -

(Signature)

Name -

* Delete if not applicable