

Communication Support Guide Example

Bethany Williams – School Camp Approval

Note: The example uses the standard escalation process. The escalation processes may vary between regions and Child Safety Service Centres. Please have a conversation with your care team to understand the correct escalation process.

Bethany is 10 years old and has a Short-Term Custody Order granting guardianship to the Chief Executive, that is due to expire in January 2026. Bethany is experiencing ongoing symptoms of grief and loss that include having a low appetite, disrupted sleep and bouts of heavy sadness where she doesn't want to play or be near other children. Reunification plans are working very well and there are high hopes that Bethany will return to her mother in January when the current custody order is due to expire.

Bethany's care arrangement has been stable with all care team members working together to ensure her family visits go well and she is receiving the supports that she needs. There is a current placement agreement that occurred at the start of the year that notes Bethany is in year 5 and her class will be attending the PCYC camp with an expected cost of \$250. It has been agreed that Child Safety will cover the camp fee.

In April, Bethany brings home a camp permission form and hands it to her Carer, Deborah. Deborah recalls the discussion the care team had about camp and considers if she is able to make the decision about Bethany's attendance.

Deborah decides to check the Qld Government website – Decisions you make:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/foster-kinship-care/information-for-carers/everyday-caring/decision-making/decisions-you-can-make>.

Deborah notices that a camp attendance is not a daily routine or care decision that a Carer can make.

Communication Process

Deborah notices Camp permission is a low category and decides to initiate the Communication process by sending the following email to her Foster and Kinship Support Agency worker and Bethany's Child Safety Officer.

Step 1 – initiate 7-day (Low) response email

Sample email:

To	CSO Email
Cc	Foster and Kinship Care Agency Support Worker
Action - Low - Bethany Williams	

Hello CSO and Foster and Kinship Support Agency,

I am emailing you today to begin the communication process as Bethany's school is currently organising for the full class to attend the PCYC camp on the 12th – 15th June. I would appreciate a response from you within our agreed timeframes, which is 7 days. You may recall that the placement agreement includes supporting Bethany to attend school camp up to the value of \$250, and this camp is within that budget.

I understand that you may not be able to gain authorisation within 7 days. If this is the case, can you please advise me of the plan you are making towards seeking a decision outcome and when I should expect to know if Bethany can attend the camp or not.

Kind regards,

Deborah Marshall

The CSO receives the email and refers to the Child Practice manual that shows Carers or delegated officers (CSO or Team Leaders) are authorised to approve this decision (except in cases high or very high-risk activity or overseas travel). The CSO would like to check this before proceeding and refers the matter to the team leader:

<https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au/procedures/support-a-child-in-care/decision-making-for-a-child>

7 days pass and Bethany has not had a response to her initial inquiry.

The Foster and Kinship Support Agency send a follow up email to the Team Leader and includes the Carer and the CSO.

Step 2 – Escalation to Team Leader (response 3-4 day)

To Team Leader

Cc Carer & CSO Email

Action - Low - Bethany Williams

Hello Team Leader,

I am following up on the email that Deborah sent 7 days ago when she initiated the communication process, however, a response has not been received within the agreed timeframe. I am now escalating the matter. Can you please respond to this email within 4 days to provide information about the expected timeframe for reaching a decision about whether Bethany can attend the school camp in June.

Kind regards,

Foster and Kinship Agency Support Worker

The Team Leader receives this email and is aware that they hold the authority to authorise the decision. The Team Leader is also aware that this situation is now in the second phase of escalation and is wanting to resolve the issue before it escalates further to the Service Centre Manager.

The team leader sends a response to Deborah's email response –

To Carer
Cc CSO & Foster and Kinship Care Agency Worker Email

Action - Low - Bethany Williams

Hello Deborah,

I apologise for the delay in getting back to you, this case has been on my mind. I understand that the fee is within the budget that was agreed upon and that child safety will be covering the cost of the PCYC camp, if approved. I have also been thinking about how best we could support Bethany to attend the camp as she will miss a visit with her mother and I know that this makes her feel sad. We will see if we can arrange a different time for Bethany to visit with her mother and that way she will not miss out.

I will email you within 3 days to provide either a decision or more information.

Kind regards,

Team Leader

Two days later the Team Leader emails Debora and includes the CSO and Foster and Kinship Agency Support worker to advise that arrangements have been made to alter the family visit time to the 10th of June and that approval for Bethany to attend the PCYC camp has been authorised.

Or

4 days pass with no response

The Foster and Kinship Support Agency initiates another escalation to the Service Centre Manager as no further information has been provided by the team leader.

Step 3 Escalation (response 24 hours)

To Service Centre Manager
Cc Carer & CSO & Foster and Kinship Care Agency Worker & Team Leader Email

RE: Action - Low - Bethany Williams

Hello Service Centre Manager,

I am emailing you on behalf of Deborah Marshall who provides primary care to Bathany Williams.

11 days ago, Deborah initiated the communication process at a low level as it related to future planning for Bathany. Deborah was seeking approval for Bathany to attend a PCYC camp that is being organised through school. The grade 5 camp is being planned for June 12th – 14th. I have had an opportunity to speak to Bathany about her wishes, and she has told me that she is really wanting to go to camp with all her classmates.

4 days ago, we had to follow the escalation process after not hearing back from the CSO. Within two days we received a response from the Team Leader who advised that they would be looking into family time planning and would be able to provide either more information or a decision by yesterday, however this update was not provided. This is why I am now drawing your attention to the final stage of the escalation process. Can you please provide either an outcome decision or a clear timeframe for when Deborah and Bathany can expect to know if camp will be approved or not.

Kind regards,

Foster and Kinship Agency Support Worker

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