



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

ORLENE HAWKS
DIRECTOR

June 18, 2021

Amy Ahola
Marquette Area Public Schools
1201 W Fair Ave
Marquette, MI 49855

RE: License #: DC520019726
Investigation #: 2021D0720001
Sandy Knoll Elementary School

Dear Ms. Ahola:

I conducted a special investigation because the child care licensing division received a complaint against your facility that related to licensing rules or law. The allegations were related to the following:

R 400.8125 Staff; volunteer; requirements.

(1) All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.

The details of the allegations are in the attached report. To investigate the allegations, I completed an onsite inspection on March 22, 2021. I interviewed the program director, licensee designee, caregivers, and observed the children.

As a result of this investigation, I found the following violation:

R 400.8125	Staff; volunteer; requirements.
	(1) All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.

I recommend no change to the current license status.

Due to the violations, you must send us a corrective action plan by 7/7/2021. You can use our [corrective action plan](#) form or create your own.

If you need help writing the corrective action plan, please contact me. If you do not send a corrective action plan, you may face disciplinary action. The corrective action plan must include the following:

- How compliance with each rule will be achieved.
- Who is directly responsible for implementing the corrective action for each violation.
- Specific time frames for each violation as to when the correction will be completed or implemented.
- How continuing compliance will be maintained once compliance is achieved.
- The signature of the responsible party and a date.

	Yes	No
A rule or law violation was found and a serious injury or death occurred.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A rule or law violation was found and abuse and/or neglect of a child occurred.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This report and any related corrective action plans must be filed in your licensing notebook. This report and any related corrective action plans will be online for parents to review under the [Statewide Search for Licensed Child Care Centers and Homes](#).

Please review the enclosed documentation for accuracy and contact me with any questions. In the event that I am not available and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the local office at (906) 226-4171.

Sincerely,

Anne O'Neill, Licensing Consultant
 Bureau of Community and Health Systems
 234 W. Baraga Ave.
 Marquette, MI 49855
 (906) 290-2131

enclosure

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SYSTEMS
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT**

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	DC520019726
Investigation #:	2021D0720001
Complaint Receipt Date:	03/17/2021
Investigation Initiation Date:	03/17/2021
Report Due Date:	05/16/2021
Licensee Name:	Marquette Area Public Schools
Licensee Address:	1201 W Fair Ave Marquette, MI 49855
Licensee Telephone #:	(906) 225-4400
Administrator:	Amy Ahola, Designee
Licensee Designee:	Amy Ahola, Designee
Name of Facility:	Sandy Knoll Elementary School
Facility Address:	401 N. Sixth Street Marquette, MI 49855-3359
Facility Telephone #:	(906) 225-4281
Original Issuance Date:	
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	12/08/2020
Expiration Date:	12/07/2022
Capacity:	50
Program Type:	CHILD CARE CENTER

II. ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
Child A, (6-year-old female), and Child B, (6-year-old female) were found to be missing when lining up to go inside the facility. After approximately five minutes, the children were found outside, hiding/playing in the tires of the playground.	Yes

III. METHODOLOGY

03/17/2021	Special Investigation Intake 2021D0720001
03/17/2021	Special Investigation Initiated - Telephone TC to Child A's parent
03/19/2021	Inspection Completed On-site 8:15 am to 9:05 a.m.
03/22/2021	Contact - Documents Received Written witness statements
03/22/2021	Exit Interview, Amy Ahola, Licensee Designee

ALLEGATION: Child A, (6-year-old female), and Child B, (6-year-old female) were found to be missing when lining up to go inside the facility. After approximately five minutes, the children were found outside, hiding/playing in the tires of the playground.

INVESTIGATION: On March 16, 2021, at approximately 9:30 a.m., Amy Ahola, Licensee Designee, phoned that an incident had occurred at Sandy Knoll Elementary School of two children being alone outside without supervision for approximately five minutes.

An incident report was received on March 17, 2021. The incident report described that:

Rylee Perry, staff member texted Amy Ahola, licensee designee at 9:11 a.m. on March 16, 2021 that two students were left on the playground for approximately five minutes that morning when they were transitioning inside to go to school.

The licensee designee notified the consultant via phone on March 17, 2021 and also notified Child A's parents and Child B's parents, the principal of the school building and the assistant superintendent of the Marquette Area Public School (MAPS)

district. The school district is the licensee. Ms. Ahola is the program director and licensee designee.

Ms. Ahola's report continued that at approximately 8:10 a.m., Amber Baker, staff member, brought the majority of the children outside. Cooper Smith, staff member, stayed inside the gym of the building to assist three other children getting ready. Child A and Child B were having trouble transitioning and were not listening when asked to get ready to go outside. The three remaining children went outside with Mr. Smith. By that time, two additional children had arrived and joined the original three children with Mr. Smith. Ms. Perry stayed inside to clean and continue to manage children's arrivals.

There were 15 children scheduled for the before school session on March 16, 2021. Two children did not arrive, but three staff members remained, per usual staffing at this site. Mr. Smith and Ms. Baker continued to monitor the outdoor play area and observed that Child A and Child B had played by the playground tires while they were outdoors. Mr. Smith also stated that he did not know at that moment how many children were outside. Ms. Ahola notes on her report that in hindsight, Mr. Smith indicated that there should have been better communication among the staff in regard to that number.

At approximately 8:40 a.m., Ms. Baker took a special needs child inside to get her ready and escort her to class. That child and Ms. Baker signed out of the program at 8:46 a.m.

At approximately 8:45 a.m. Mr. Smith called for the children to line up. Not knowing the exact number of children present, he asked the children, "Is everyone here?" When they said yes, the group went inside the school building.

The routine after play time is for the children to use the bathroom, wash their hands, gather their things, and line up for school. When children were lining up Ms. Perry noticed that Child A and Child B were missing. She did not find them in the bathroom and told Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith went out to the playground and found Child A and Child B hiding and playing in the tire structures. They had been away from the group for approximately five minutes. Child A and Child B told Mr. Smith that they did not hear the call to go in and were not aware that everyone had gone inside. The children were brought inside to line up with the group and all children transitioned to their classrooms.

Ms. Ahola also stated that the standard protocol for monitoring the number of children was not followed that morning. Typically, the first person to go outside will count the children they are taking out and communicate that number to the other staff members. Then when another staff member goes outside with more children, the new total number of children is shared among staff. For example, you had 7, I brought 5 and now we have 12. When a staff member is monitoring the door, and they escort children outside, they say how many children are being sent out. The

staff outdoors then incorporate the new number into the total. On March 16, 2021, no additional children joined the outdoor play area after the first two groups went out with staff members.

Ms. Ahola notes that expected (scheduled) attendance lists are printed for staff members to use as a guide. Ms. Ahola discussed the issues with these staff members and notes that they feel “awful about what happened and will do everything they can to keep something like this from happening again.”

Ms. Ahola planned a staff meeting for discussing what supports are needed and if the protocol should be adjusted and the importance of making sure the counting/child/monitoring/safety protocols are followed.

Ms. Ahola sent an email to the parents of children enrolled in the program. Its contents are below:

“I’m writing to you this afternoon to inform you of an incident that occurred at our program this morning and will most likely result in a special investigation by our licensing agency. When the children came in from playing outside to get ready for school, 2 children were left on the playground for approximately 5 minutes. Staff noticed that the 2 children were missing from the group when the children were coming out from the bathroom and getting ready to line up for class. The two children were playing on the playground and were fine and playing/hiding when staff retrieved them. Once I was informed of the situation, I immediately self reported the incident to our licensing agency, contacted the parents of the children involved via telephone, and informed the school of the situation. I know that the staff members involved feel horrible and will never let something like this happen again. As a whole, our staff will be discussing the situation and additional techniques to help maintain child count and supervision at all times, hoping to use it as a learning experience for everyone.”

Ms. Ahola also sent the attendance records for March 16, 2021 to me. There were 13 children listed in attendance during the morning session. These children arrived between the hours of 6:48 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. The staff members’ attendance records reflected three staff members present for the morning session.

I reviewed the staff members’ files and attendance records at the March 19, 2021 inspection. The staff members’ records were in order, with all background clearances, training, and required documentation on file.

I also reviewed child information cards and child attendance records. All documentation was in compliance with licensing rules.

I observed that due to the pandemic, children are not accompanied into the school building with a parent. Instead, the parent brings the child to the door of the school and phones the program cell phone number. A staff member then goes to the door

and takes the child into care from the parent. Ms. Ahola has noted that although it is rare for more than 18 children to be in attendance, she has three staff members on to provide for these needs.

I confirmed the need for written statements from the staff members during this inspection. The interviews with staff members Rylee Perry, Amber Baker and Cooper Smith and observations at this inspection were consistent with Ms. Ahola's verbal and written statements.

A written statement was received from Rylee Perry on March 22, 2021. She notes:

"I was inside with the program phone watching the door to make sure no more students were arriving. I was sitting and waiting for one student (who did not come) and cleaning up the gym when Amber (who is also a classroom aide at the school) brought a child in to go to class at 8:40 a.m. Cooper and the students came in at 8:45 a.m. to line up for class. At 8:50 a.m., I noticed that Child A and Child B were not lined up and checked the girls' bathroom and sink area. I did not find them and asked Cooper where they were. Cooper said, 'Are they not in the bathroom?' I said no. Cooper opened the door to go back outside. I communicated that I would stay inside with the other students while he did an initial check and recommended that he check under the tires. They were under a tire. They were back inside with their hands washed at 8:55 a.m. They seemed to have their normal, giggly attitudes and did not appear upset. I called Amy after the students were in class to inform her.

I received a written statement from Amber Baker via email on March 23, 2021. She states:

...As I work in the school as a paraprofessional, during the day, I take any 4th and 5th grader with me inside the school about 5 minutes early. On that morning [March 16, 2021] I get ready to go inside about 8:40 a.m. When I entered the building, I felt that all children were accounted for and our staff was actively engaged with them. I try to do 'my rounds' before I leave each day and throughout playtime, checking on each group, which I did before leaving. I am unsure of what happened after I left, but I do believe it is possible those particular students could have hid or simply not heard our staff's calls."

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.8125	Staff; volunteer; requirements.
	(1) All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.

ANALYSIS:	Two 6-year-old children were left unattended outside for approximately five minutes. Staff members did not know the location of the children. The children were not appropriately accounted for and were without appropriate care and supervision.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION ESTABLISHED

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Upon receipt of an acceptable corrective action plan, I recommend no change in the license status.

 June 18, 2021

Anne O'Neill Date
Licensing Consultant

Approved By:

 June 18, 2021

Rose A. Rafferty Date
Area Manager