

Uncollected Child (Policy & Procedures)

Policy statement

At the end of a school day, or of an activity for children arranged by a school, the children concerned will transfer back to the care of their parents or carers. Some older children (Years 5 and 6) will be of an age and ability to make their own way home, but parents will often need to make arrangements for the collection of their children due to their age, ability, the time or location of the activity. Most will be collected by a parent/carer, whilst some will be transported via Local Authority services to their home for the transfer of responsibility to take place there.

These arrangements are well established and understood by parents and carers and generally work extremely well. However there are occasions when events prevent parents or carers arriving on time to collect their child. In most of these cases the delay is minimal. In other cases the parent will notify the school or organisation and agree new arrangements.

This policy is concerned with the cases where the arrangements to hand back responsibility fail, and contact with the parents cannot be made, or when parents cannot make arrangements within a reasonable period of time.

In the event that a child within the EYFS, KS1 or KS2 is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a school day/Aftercare session, the school puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who, where possible, is known to the child. We will endeavour to ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

This policy was written in accordance with the advice given in Birmingham City Council's guidance – Emergency Procedures When A Child Is Not Collected, April 2016.

Procedures

Parent/carers of children starting in the Lower School are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form:

- Parent/Carer names
- Home address and telephone number - if the parent/carers do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative.
- Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
- Mobile telephone number (if applicable).

- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least two other relatives/carers who can be called when the parent/carer cannot be contacted or in the event of an emergency. The school must keep this record up to date, and ensure that key staff are informed of any changes.
- Who has parental responsibility for the child.
- If applicable, information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- ❖ On occasions when parent/carers are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they must inform the School in writing of how they can be contacted.
- ❖ On occasions when parent/carers or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, parent/carers must provide the School with written details of the name and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child together with a password. We agree with parent/carers how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.
- ❖ If parent/carers are not able to collect their child as planned, they must inform us, so that we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parent/carers with our contact telephone number.
- ❖ We apply our child protection procedures in the event that a child is not collected from setting by an authorised adult within one hour after the setting has closed, and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises.

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:

- The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
- If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parent/carers to collect their child from the setting, and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the registration form are contacted.
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the registration form.
- If no-one collects the child after one hour, and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the **procedures for uncollected children**:
- The child stays at setting in the care of two staff members until the child is safely collected by the parent/carers or a social worker.
- Social Care or the police will aim to find the parent/carer or relative, if they are unable to do so the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances do staff go to look for the parent/carer, nor do they take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.

Uncollected Child Procedure:

Whenever a parent fails to collect a child from school or an activity at the expected time, or a parent/carer is not at home to receive the child from school transport services:

1. This will be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher or a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). A nominated member of the school staff will then make every effort to contact the parent/carer or the named alternative carers (including where known, other settings that siblings attend to see if they are experiencing the same problem).
2. Parent/carers will be reminded of the correct time for releasing children into their care, and asked if there is a genuine reason for the late collection.
3. If this happens without a genuine reason more than 3 times in a term, parent/carers will be advised they risk losing their child's place in the School/Aftercare where applicable.
4. If 10 minutes after school day/after school club has finished the child has not been collected, s/he will be placed in Aftercare and the parent/carer charged. Where this is not possible due to minimum staffing levels, at least two staff will be present until responsibility for the child is handed over including, where possible, a staff member of the same gender as the child. **If we cannot place the child in Aftercare and other staff need to be sourced to supervise the child, parents will be charged £20 for each 15 minutes they are late.**
5. Staff will record the incident on a contact report sheet, stating the times and people that they have tried to make contact with.
6. If the child has not been collected/received, and it has not been possible to contact a parent or named carer, 1 hour after the agreed finish time for the school day/activity, a phone call should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0121 303 1888. MASH will act in a coordinating role in the first instance and will need the following information:
 - a. Brief circumstances of incident, and arrangements in place mapped against the 'Right Services Right Time' threshold model.
 - i. Child's details
 - ii. Name(s)
 - iii. Date of birth
 - iv. Address
 - v. Gender
 - vi. Ethnicity
 - vii. Religion
 - viii. Language spoken
 - ix. Special dietary needs
 - x. SEN/behavioural difficulties/medical needs/
 - b. Parent/Carer Contact Details
 - i. Parent/carer/alternative carer details
 - ii. Name(s)
 - iii. Address(es)
 - iv. Home/work/mobile telephone number(s)
 - c. Any current or previous child protection concerns*
 - d. Any previous incidents of not being collected from school
 - e. Details of GP/Health Visitor (optional).

*If the child has an allocated social worker, the school will contact the social worker, or the allocated team manager via Children's Information and Advice Service (CIAS) (303 1888 option 2) instead of contacting the MASH.
7. Where a child has been placed in our Aftercare provision, or has not been picked up, such provision timescales and contact numbers need to reflect the time the 'non-collection' will occur. In this circumstance:
 - a. If the child has not been collected / received, and it has not been possible to contact a parent or named carer, 30 minutes after the agreed finish time for the Aftercare, a phone call should be made to the **Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0121 464 9001**

8. Note that the CIAS switchboards close at 5.15 p.m. (4.15 Friday) after which the Emergency Duty Team must be contacted. The contact details for CIAS and the Emergency Duty Team are as follows:

Children's Information and Advice Service - Tel No 0121 303 1888
Emergency Duty Team- Tel No 0121 464 9001

9. MASH will give advice and may carry out appropriate checks and make further attempts to contact the parent/carer. If there are any concerns about the welfare of the parent/carer, MASH will, on a case by case basis, ask the local police to visit the home address.
10. If an appropriate relative or carer is located, s/he will be asked to ensure that the child is collected/received from the school. If there is a genuine reason for the relative or carer being unable to do this, MASH will liaise with School about possible arrangements for the child to be taken to the address, though this will occur only under exceptional circumstances.
11. In making decisions, Social Care Services and the School will prioritise interim care arrangements that best meet the child's personal and emotional needs.
12. If the combined attempts to contact a parent or appropriate carer by the School or MASH remain unsuccessful 1½ hours (by 17.00hrs) after the normal end of the school day/activity, Social Care Services will normally make a decision to assume care of the child and arrange for him/her to be taken to a place of safety.
- a. For children with health care requirements it is expected that the health care plan will include a risk assessment and plan to meet the needs of a child not picked up or dropped off at home by home-to-school transport.
13. By 17.15hrs MASH will confirm the arrangements with the school/organisation and with those caring for the child at that time, before the MASH closes, and also hand this information over to the EDT team. The Emergency Duty Team will continue to liaise with the School as appropriate until an appropriate placement is identified.
14. Plans for transporting the child will take into account staff availability out of hours, the need for adequate insurance cover, appropriate gender balance, in car safety, and any information about special needs or behavioural difficulties etc. provided by the School. Where possible, two adults should be present. If there is a shortage of staff, or adequate arrangements a mini cab could be used with a suitable escort.
15. The School will send a letter to the parent/carer notifying them of the incident and of the arrangements that were made to care for the child. (*An example of this letter can be found at [Appendix A](#)*).
16. **Children collected after 6.00pm will incur a financial penalty and parents will be charged £20 for each 15 minutes they are late.** This is to cover the School's costs in overtime for staff supervising the child and the caretaker who cannot lock the building whilst the child and staff remain on the premises.
17. When staff have safeguarding concerns about a child, this **will also be** recorded and reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the out of hours Emergency Duty Care Team.

Concerns about the child's welfare

18. The Head Teacher/Senior member of the Leadership Team should meet with the parent on the next working day and outline the actions that the school had to take and why. This will include informing the parent of any arising financial issues and agreeing a payment date.

19. Where more than one incident occurs, repeated episodes of late collection with notification, or where there are reasons for concern regarding the ability of parent(s)/carer(s) to collect/receive their child, the Head Teacher will:
- Initiate a discussion between the School and the parent to identify a strategy for addressing these concerns.
 - Where agreement cannot be reached with parents, or in cases where there are child protection concerns, a referral to MASH will be completed and Social Care Services will be invited to contribute to identifying the strategy for addressing the concerns and safeguarding the child.

Children Transported Home from School

Children transported from school generally have special educational needs the contact with Children's Social Care should be made to the Children with Disabilities Team via CIAS.

20. Where arrangements are in place for a child to be transported home from school or an activity, the school will ensure that the driver/guide has an emergency telephone number for making contact in the event of problems.
21. The school should also provide a brief précis of the child's health and emotional needs. These should be stored in a sealed envelope and only opened if the child is placed as part of an interim arrangement.
22. If there is no response at the home address, the guide or driver will immediately inform the school/organisation (if still available), who will agree the initial action to be taken. The school must also inform the Education Transport Service (if the school is no longer available the guide must inform the Education Transport Service).
23. The guide or driver will leave a proforma (*see Appendix B*) at the child's address with the school's contact details.
24. If there are other children in the same vehicle that need to be taken home then this child will remain in the vehicle whilst this is done.
25. In the meantime, the school/organisation or Transport Assist (the Education Transport Service) will contact MASH via CIAS or if after 5.15pm the Emergency Duty Team. (See 6-13 above). The school/ Transport Assist will notify the guide/driver of action agreed with MASH.

Birmingham Education Transport Service has a Code of Good Practice which clearly sets out the responsibilities of the Guide escorting pupils home should a parent or carer not be present to receive the child:

[School Travel Good Practice Guide](#)

You must under no circumstances hand over any pupil under your charge to an adult who has not been authorised by school or the Education Transport Service. If neither a parent nor another responsible adult is at the appropriate address when you take a child home you should ensure that the pupil is not left unattended. If it is a rare occasion and there are other children on the vehicle then you are advised to keep this pupil on the vehicle and call back later.

If the parents or a responsible adult are still not available, the pupil guide is advised to telephone the school or the Education Transport Service for advice. In exceptional circumstances you may need to contact Harris House (Children's Disability Team) or the Emergency Duty Team (CYPFD Social Care) for advice. You may be required to take a child to the nearest Social Care Area Office. In such instances you must put a card/note through the letterbox of the pupil home address indicating where you have taken the pupil to.

(Home to School Transport Code of Good Practice, Birmingham LA, point 16, pages 15 - 16)

Reviewed January 2017 Next Review January 2018

APPENDIX A:

Dear Parent/Carer's name

Re: On....Day/ Date/ Time.

Your Child(ren)'s name(s)

were not collected/ received at the end of [the school day][the activity attended], and we were unable to contact you or your named carer(s).

As a result, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of your child(ren), we implemented the procedure for dealing with children not collected/received at the end of [the school day][the activity].

This procedure, which has been agreed by the School, Social Care Services, the Police and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board, involved us contacting Social Care Services in order that arrangements could be made to ensure your child was safeguarded.

I hope that the reasons for your child not being collected are not serious, but would you please contact me as soon as possible to discuss this matter further.

You can also contact Social Care on 0121 303 188 for further information about the action taken.

Yours sincerely

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