



Partnership Achievement Community Excellence

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# Uncollected Children Policy

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# Beecholme Primary School

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## Contents Introduction

Introduction .....	2
Policy.....	2
Procedures.....	3
Collection .....	3
Uncollected children.....	3
After School Activities/Care.....	4
Pupils Whose Parent/Carer Refuses to Comply with a School Exclusion .....	5
Action by the school by the Safeguarding Lead and Senior Leadership Team.....	5

## Introduction

This policy should be used whenever a child, who ordinarily does not make their own way home, has not been collected from school at the end of the day or from after school clubs and activities, and it has not been possible to contact their parents or carers.

Where children are collected late from school on a regular basis the matter will be followed up with a face to face meeting with the parent/carers. However, there will be the occasions when parents and carers fail to collect a child due to an accident, illness or other emergencies which will result in the child not being able to go home at the end of the day. On these occasions, it is important that these procedures are followed so that the child can be looked after in a safe and welcoming environment.

This policy has been developed in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and in line with the Local Authorities Safeguarding Procedures.

## Policy

The Local Authority works to the London Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures which allow school staff to make alternative arrangements for the child's care. If there are no immediate child protection issues, Teachers and Office staff should:

- Establish the child's understanding of the whereabouts of the parent or responsible person and of the arrangements made;

- If the parent can be located, reunite parent and child and ensure adequate arrangements are in place in future;
- If the parent or responsible person seems likely to return shortly, wait with the child.

If the parent or responsible adult has not arrived within 30 minutes, the school should contact the child's emergency contact person and arrange for the child to go to them. If this is not possible, the relevant Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS) should be contacted by 4.30pm.

## Procedures

### Collection

1. At the end of each school day children are dismissed into the care of a known adult by their class teacher/teaching assistant.
2. Once a child has been dismissed to his/her carer or parent the responsibility for that child's welfare becomes theirs.
3. PACE has an expectation that children under the age of 10 (Year 5) will not be sent to or collected from school without a responsible adult.
4. Beecholme will not release a child into the care of an unrecognised adult without specific written or telephoned permission from a known parent/carer. Where there is any doubt as to the identity or suitability of such a person and there is no other way of ensuring the child's safety, this will be referred to the police as an emergency.
5. The expectation is that older siblings collecting children will be a minimum of 14 years of age except in special circumstances agreed by a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
6. When a carer is late collecting a child from school, there is an expectation that the school will be contacted in advance so that necessary arrangements can be made for the care of the child.

### Uncollected children

1. If a child has not been collected, the school should make every possible attempt to contact the parents, carers or another family member. The child may be able to indicate if there is something out of the ordinary. On some occasions another parent may offer to take a child home with them. Schools should never release a child into the care of another adult who is not a family member or the child's emergency contact person without the consent of the parent or carer, and members of staff should not take children home with them.
2. A member of the Senior Leadership Team or Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately of any uncollected child.
3. If no contact has been made and no one has arrived to collect the child, then the duty social worker at the relevant CYPS office should be contacted at 4.30 p.m. Referrals should be made to the child's residing borough:

Duty Manager (Merton CYPS)	Duty Manager (Lambeth CYPS)	Duty Manager (Croydon CYPS)
Civic Centre (MASH Team) London Road Morden SM4 5DX <b>Telephone:</b> 0208 545 4226 or 7 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mash@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net">mash@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net</a> <b>Fax:</b> 0208 545 4204	International House 6 Canterbury Crescent London SW9 7QE <b>Telephone:</b> 0207 926 1000 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:dutymanger@lambeth.gov.uk">dutymanger@lambeth.gov.uk</a> <b>Fax:</b> 0207 926 6874	Taberner House Park Lane Croydon CR9 3JS <b>Telephone:</b> 020 8726 6400 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk">childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk</a> <b>Fax:</b> 0208 633 9441

4. The duty social worker will agree a timetable for further actions, should the child remain uncollected and deemed to have been abandoned.
5. It may be necessary for the child to be taken from the school to a CYPS office. Staff are not to transport children alone. Arrangements should be made to transport the child by taxi or mini cab. Two members of staff will be needed to accommodate transport to the relevant CYPS office.
6. There may be occasions when a school building is locked up whilst staff are waiting for someone to arrive to collect the child. A public building should be sought as a place to wait and the parent/carer should be informed of the arrangements.
7. A child should never be sent to a play centre or after school care/activity if the parents or carers have not arrived. It is the responsibility of the school to try to contact the parent or pass the matter on to the Family Services Team.
8. The duty social worker will ensure that the school has a contact number for them beyond normal office hours.
9. Once the child is in the care of CYPS, they will take the responsibility for tracing the parents or carers. The duty social worker will make arrangements for the child to be looked after until the parents or carers can be traced. The duty manager will liaise with the Emergency Duty Social Worker or police service as appropriate regarding possible follow-up contact with parents/carers out of office hours.
10. Duty managers will consider the need for follow-up investigations where the failure to collect a child indicates ongoing parenting concerns.

#### After School Activities/Care

Where a child, who is normally collected at the end of the club or session, is not collected by a named responsible person, contact will be made with the child's parent or carer or the emergency contact. After-school clubs will obtain from parents the name of an alternative carer or emergency contact.

If the child remains uncollected 30 minutes after the end of the session (or by 16.45 for activities that are scheduled to end at 16.30) and the alternative carer is not available, the club/care staff will inform the Extended Services Manager, SLT and the Safeguarding Lead, who will contact the relevant local authority. For sessions/care that ends after 17.00, the contact will be the Emergency Duty Social Worker.

#### Pupils Whose Parent/Carer Refuses to Comply with a School Exclusion

When a school excludes a pupil, the safety and welfare of the child remains the exclusive responsibility of the parent or carer. If a parent refuses to cooperate with the exclusion and continues to send the child to school, the school should not place an unaccompanied child at risk by refusing to allow them on site. If the parent refuses to collect the child from school, the school may impose an internal exclusion or defer the exclusion until such time that the parent cooperates with the exclusion. Continued refusal by the parent/carers to cooperate with the exclusion should be considered under the school's Child Protection Policy as potentially placing the child at risk of Significant Harm to their emotional or intellectual development.

#### Action by the school by the Safeguarding Lead and Senior Leadership Team

Inform parents/carers of the importance of collecting their child/ren on time and of the expectation that they should contact the school as soon as it appears that they may have a problem.

Offer advice and support to parents and carers who repeatedly arrive late to collect their child/ren before escalating the matter as a safeguarding concern. School staff will make all efforts to contact parents and carers.

A referral should be made in writing to the relevant duty manager explaining the situation so that in the event that parents come forward out of hours, the allocated social worker can take any necessary action to re-unite the child with their parent or carer.

As appropriate: any action taken should be put in writing to the parent/carers and they should be invited into school to discuss the matter further to avoid future incidents.

It is anticipated that these guidelines will be used infrequently. However, on the occasions when they are necessary, it is anticipated that they will enable a school to deal effectively with an uncollected child in co-operation with the relevant local authority.