



Featherstone Nursey School

UNCOLLECTED & MISSING CHILDREN POLICY

Rationale

From time to time parents or carers may have difficulties in arriving at the end of the session to collect their children. This may happen for a variety of reasons and in isolated incidents the Nursery will always attempt to contact parents and care for the child until the parent can collect him/her.

However, in the event that a parent may not be contacted, or when a child is repeatedly uncollected, the Nursery must have procedures in place to support the child and parents.

Aims

- To ensure that a child is cared for appropriately in the event that no authorised adult is available to collect him/her
- To identify clearly for staff, parents and governors the procedures that will be followed in the event that a child is not collected
- To share procedures with adults, parents and carers

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

This policy is in accordance with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 1 - Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

Article 3 - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 4 - Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights.

Article 12 - Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 13 - Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 15 - Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 17 - Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. This should be information that children can understand.

Article 28 - Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity.

Article 29 - Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31 - Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Process

This process has been endorsed by Directorate for People Children's Social Care, the Police and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board.

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we will 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 child will be properly cared for.

Parents of children at the setting are asked to provide specific information which is recorded on our Admissions Form, including:

- Home address and telephone number
- Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable)
- Mobile telephone number (if applicable)
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by parents to collect their child, for example grandparent or childminder
- Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child
- Who has parental responsibility for the child
- Any change of contact details

Parents/carers' contact details are checked each term and parents/carers are asked to notify us immediately of any changes to these details.

Featherstone Nursery School will make it clear to parents/carers in writing the normal finish times for the school/activity or the arrangements for children to be collected at the end of the school day/activity. Any changes will be notified to parents/carers in writing. This will include notification of any additional financial charge for the use of after school facilities.

Procedures

Parents should be aware that only adults of 16 years and over are allowed to collect children. In the event that a child is not collected at the end of the session we follow the set of procedures listed below:

- We will contact the parent/carer by telephone if parent is more than 15 minutes late
- If unable to contact parent/carer we will contact the named people who are authorized to collect the child
- If contact cannot be made with parent/carer or unauthorised person at the first attempt we will continue to call up to one hour after the agreed collection time
- Where known we will also contact other settings that siblings attend to see if they are experiencing the same problem.
- If the child has not been collected 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 will be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0121 303 1888. MASH will act in a coordinating role in the first instance.
- 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.

- The school will organise a rota to allow at least two staff to stay until responsibility for the child is handed over.
- The DSL will maintain a record of incidents where parents do not collect a child from school or other activities. Any child welfare concerns arising out of such an incident(s) will be dealt with in accordance with the child safeguarding procedures of the school.

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-
Emergency Duty Team-**

**Tel No 0121 303 1888
Tel No 0121 464 9001**

Procedures after MASH are contacted

- 1) 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.
- 2) If an appropriate relative or carer is located, he/she will be asked to ensure that the child is 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.
- 3) In making decisions, Social Care Services and the school will prioritise interim care arrangements that best meet the child's personal and emotional needs.
- 4) 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.
- 5) By 17.15hrs MASH will confirm the arrangements with the school 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.
- 6) 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/organisation. 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.
- 7) 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).*

Concerns about the child's welfare

- 8) The Head Teacher / 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 plan
- 9) Where more than one incident occurs, repeated episodes on late collection with notification or where there are reasons for concern regarding the ability of parent(s)/carer(s) to collect their child, the Head Teacher will:
 - a) Initiate a discussion between the school and the parent to identify a strategy for addressing these concerns.
 - b) 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.

Missing Child Procedures

In addition to the above, to ensure the continuous safety and security of all children within our organisation we undertake to do the following:

- Ensure that all gates and entry/exit doors are fitted with appropriate locks/handles and/or security devices placed at such a height as to ensure that children do not have unauthorised access, in order to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised, and intruders are unable to gain access.
- Request all visitors provide appropriate identification and state the reason for their visit prior to admittance. We record the name of each visitor and their company details or reason for visiting us on our visitor sheet. Visitors will also be issued with an identification pass and a visitor lanyard.
- All children are to be signed into and out of the Nursery School through registration carried out by key workers. The time of arrival and collection is also recorded in the late book if different to usual school hours.

In the event of a missing child the following procedures will apply:

- The police will be called immediately.
- A thorough search of the area the child was last seen in will be conducted. All staff present at the time of the incident or when the child was last seen will be contacted to gain all relevant information.
- Attempts will be made to contact the parent/carers (as advised by the police).
- Any available CCTV footage will be examined
- A safeguarding incident report will be completed.
- We will inform OfSTED on 0300 123 1231
- We contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0121 303 1888 or, in the event of a concern out of hours, we contact the emergency duty team on 0121 464 9001.

Policy Agreed by Governing Body on:

Signed: Date :

APPENDIX A – Letter to parents

Dear Parent/Carer’s name

Re:

On.....(day). Your Child(ren)name(s)

were not collected/ received at the end of the school day, 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’.

This procedure, which has been agreed by our school, Children’s 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 safe.

I hope that the reasons for your child not being collected are not serious. It is important that this situation does not arise again. Therefore please could you come to the school on:

Date:

Time:

To meet with:

If you wish to find out what action was taken by Children’s Social care you can contact them on 0121 303 1888 for further information.

Yours sincerely