

# Children Collected Late or Not Collected from Educational Settings Guidance

## Context

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Local Authorities and educational settings have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This duty extends to having arrangements in place for handling situations where children are not collected at the end of the educational setting day, or at the end of an educational setting activity which is authorised by the educational setting.

On admission of their child/ren to the educational setting, parents should supply:

- Names and addresses of parents/carers (and confirmation of parental responsibility)
- Home and work telephone numbers
- Mobile phone numbers where appropriate
- The emergency contact details of **at least two people** who may be called in the event of parents/carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency.

**This information should be updated annually or whenever circumstances change.**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child/ren are collected by a named contact. Parents/carers must notify the educational setting immediately if it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child/ren may be late. This should be clearly stated within appropriate educational setting policy documents and communicated to parents via their website and educational setting communications.

Educational staff should continue to care for the child/ren who have not been collected from an educational setting until such time as they have been collected by a parent/carer, or until appropriate alternative care arrangements have been made with the Children's Resource Service (CRS), and/or the Police, in order to maintain the child/ren's safety.

It is recommended that if parents/carers have not collected their child/ren twenty minutes after the normal end of the educational setting day (or twenty minutes following the end of the after-school educational setting activity) and have not contacted the educational setting to advise of their lateness, educational setting staff will start calling parents, and thereafter listed emergency contact numbers, until contact is made.

Any child/ren should remain at the educational setting until either a parent or another authorised adult is able to collect them. The child/ren can be taken to their home under exceptional circumstances, however parental permission and educational setting approval would be required before doing so, and at least two members of staff would need to accompany the child/ren.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect from an educational setting or are late having provided

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no reasonable explanation, or where there are repeated incidents. If an incident results in concerns about the child/ren's safety and wellbeing, these will be dealt with in accordance with the educational setting's Child Protection/Safeguarding policy and procedures. Persistent failure to collect a child/ren from an educational setting could constitute neglect and if the issue cannot be resolved between the educational setting and parents, the allocated social worker should be contacted or a referral made to the CRS.

If a child refuses to go home, educational staff should explore the context and attempt to resolve the situation using in-educational setting resources. Educational settings should make contact with the allocated social worker or, subsequently, the CRS for advice as soon as it becomes apparent that a resolution is not achievable.

## Procedure

- If a child is not collected by a parent/carer after the end of the educational setting day or approved activity, the DSL or Senior Leader will be notified.
- Every effort will then be made to contact the parent/carer, or failing that the emergency contact/s.
- If an emergency contact collects the child, the educational setting has a duty of care to ensure the child remains safe, and appropriate follow-up communication should be made to ensure the child is reunited with their caregiver. If the emergency contact cannot locate the parent/ carer, the emergency contact should be advised to seek support from the allocated social worker/ the CRS/ EDT or the Police and to keep the educational setting updated.
- In the case of a child/ren not being collected and **no contact being made successfully with either the parent/carer or emergency contacts within 30 minutes of the usual collection time**, the educational setting will send two members of staff to the home address (if local and reasonable) to try and make contact.
- If the child/ren have educational setting age siblings, contact the relevant educational setting to see if they have any information.
- If no contact is made by parents/carers, and no information can be provided by any educational settings attended by siblings, educational staff should make contact with the allocated social worker or the CRS to discuss the concern and seek advice. If a child has an allocated social worker, they should be contacted in the first instance. If unavailable, educational setting staff should call their relevant area duty line. It is important that educational settings alert the CRS at the earliest opportunity in order that further support may be organised in a timely manner. The CRS may also be able to provide additional identified contacts for the educational setting to attempt communication with.

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## Key telephone contacts:

The Children's Resource Service (CRS) **02380 83 2300** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm)

Emergency Duty Team (EDT) **02380 23 3344** (weekends, Bank Holidays and outside of office hours)

**If the child/ren have an allocated social worker, always contact them first.** Contact the CRS if this is not possible.

Contact the allocated social worker/ the CRS to provide 'early warning' of a situation if initial phone calls to named contacts/emergency contacts and home visit do not resolve the situation.

- Educational settings should consider where it is most suitable and comfortable for the child/ren to be located whilst investigations are being made, for example, being located with the child's class teacher in their familiar classroom or in an after-school club, if available. Educational settings should ensure the child/ren's immediate needs are met, for example, food, warmth and comfort.
- If there are welfare concerns, the appropriate emergency services may need to be alerted. For information which may need to be passed on, see Appendix A. The educational setting will continue to be responsible for trying to contact the parent/carers/emergency contacts and to keep the CRS updated regarding the situation.
- The CRS may advise that police involvement is necessary. This would be applicable if the child is at immediate risk of harm or the situation cannot be resolved by the educational setting and the CRS alone. Educational settings should call the non-emergency police telephone number (101) unless there is an immediate risk, in which case call the police emergency telephone number (999).
- If attempts to contact a parent/carers are still unsuccessful, educational settings, and the allocated social worker or the CRS, and the police will jointly assess and take responsibility for children to then be transported to a place of safety. This is a last resort, and parents/carers should do their best to ensure that this is not necessary. The CRS will notify the educational setting of the child's placement and provide contact details as appropriate. The CRS' main intention will be to return the child/ren to their parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

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- It is important for educational settings to have a plan for emergency after hours staffing in place for instances such as this, ensuring staff with appropriate seniority are involved. It is recommended that no single member of staff is left alone to resolve a situation.

## Key Roles and Responsibilities:

**Educational setting Staff:** Responsible for initial contact attempts and taking all reasonable steps to locate parents/carers, caring for the child on-site, and escalating the situation to the allocated social worker, the CRS and/or subsequently the Police.

**Children's Resource Service (CRS):** Lead agency in assessing the child's welfare, arranging temporary care, and coordinating with Police and the educational setting.

**Police:** Assist in situations where there is immediate risk of harm, support the CRS in the assessment and ensure the safety of all involved.

## Post Incident

Educational settings may need to consider the following post incident:

- Have all appropriate agencies been made aware of the incident, for example, The Virtual School if a child is Looked After, Post Looked After or under a Special Guardianship Order?
- Would a restorative meeting with parents/carers be useful?
- Would the child benefit from additional in-educational setting resources, e.g., ELSA support?
- Does a referral need to be made to other relevant agencies, e.g., Family Help, The Mental Health Support Team, School Nursing Service etc?
- Does the child's individual support plan/ behaviour plan/ risk assessment plan need to be reviewed?

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## **Appendix A**

List of information which may be required by the CRS/Police in the event of a child being referred as not having been collected:

- Child's details including name, date of birth and address
- Brief outline of the incident
- Name, role and contact details of referrer
- Parent/Carer/ emergency contact details
- Any current/previous child protection concerns
- Any previous incidents of the child not being collected

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## Appendix B

### Late Collection Log

For use by the DSL every time a parent/carer is more than 20 minutes late to collect a child at the end of the educational setting day/activity.

This log should be scanned into the child's CPOMS/ safeguarding file and audited for repeated patterns of late/non collection, which may indicate an underlying problem.

Date:	Class:
Name of child:	Name of teacher:
Reason for late/no collection:	
External Agencies contacted? If so, who?	Arrangements made:
Follow up actions:	
Signature of DSL:	

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## **Appendix C**

### **Letter to use when a child is collected late from an educational setting or activity**

Dear

As you are aware, (Child's name) was collected late from (educational setting) on (date).

I would like to remind you that in order to keep your child/ren safe, the (educational setting) is obliged to implement its Late Collection Procedure for children not collected on time.

If you are regularly late to collect your child, fail to collect your child after 20 minutes, or fail to make suitable alternative collection arrangements, this may lead to the educational setting contacting the Children's Resource Services at Southampton City Council and the Police.

Please do speak to either me or your child's teacher if you are currently experiencing difficulties in collecting your child, or if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely,

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## **Appendix D**

### **Letter for use when alternative transport arrangements have been made with verbal consent only**

Dear

This letter is to document that as you were not able to collect (child/ren) from (educational setting) on (date), you gave your consent via telephone for (Name) to take (him/her/ them) home.

This was noted at the time and this arrangement was carried out in order to keep your child(ren) safe. Please do speak to either me or your child's teacher if you are currently experiencing difficulties in collecting your child, or if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely,



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## **Appendix E**

### **Letter for use when a child is not collected from an educational setting or activity**

Dear

(Child's name) was not collected from (educational setting) on (day/date) and we were unable to contact you or the emergency contacts you have provided.

In circumstances where children are not collected at the end of the (educational setting) day/ (educational setting) after school activity, we are obliged to work within local procedures for keeping children safe and this resulted in the educational setting contacting the Children's Resource Service at Southampton City Council.

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

Yours sincerely,