



COLLECTING CHILDREN AND CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED



"Let us love, not in word, but in truth and action." (1 John 3:18)

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In building solid foundations for every unique individual and putting God's love at the centre of all we do, our children learn to embrace our diverse world. We encourage our children to learn universally in order to understand our heritage and roots as a village, town, region and nation. Through strong community links, our children grow in **compassion** and **understanding**, promote **justice** and possess **aspirations** to make a positive difference. We offer an ambitious curriculum that ignites **curiosity** along with high personal expectations that fosters **resilience** and which enables them to flourish. Our children are easily distinguished by the **courage** they show when making brave choices and understand the importance of becoming the very best versions of themselves.

Purpose of Policy

St. Anne's Copp CE Primary School, Great Eccleston recognises that it has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils, and that this duty extends to having arrangements in place for dealing with children at the end of the school day as well as those not collected from school, after a school activity or at the end of Geccoes (after school club). This protocol explains those arrangements.

This protocol will be brought to the attention of parents/carers, in writing, when their child first starts at the school. The protocol is referred to in the school's child protection policy & procedures, of which staff and parents must also be made aware. It is essential that parents provide the school with a record of their contact details, i.e. names, addresses, home, work & mobile telephone numbers. If possible, parents should also provide the school with the contact details 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 will endeavour to keep this record up to date by reminding parents of the need to notify the school of any changes.

It is not school policy to allow any unknown persons to collect children from the school. If a 'new person' is going to be collecting a child at the end of the school day school must be informed by the parent/carer in the morning (with a brief description of the adult who is going to be collecting the child as well as a password that is child-specific), otherwise the child will not be released into the care of person/s unknown. In this situation, the school agrees to care for a pupil who has not been collected until such time as he/she is collected by a parent/carer, or appropriate alternative arrangements are made with social care and/or police to ensure the child's safety.

When older children are not being collected by parents/carers and those parents/carers have agreed that they are allowed to walk home from school, such children will be required to sign the "Walking Home" book. Children at Geccoes **MUST** be picked up by an adult.

When a child is not collected from school, and it is considered appropriate, the Headteacher will send a letter to the parent(s)/carer(s) notifying them of the arrangements that were made to care for the child. A sample letter can be found at appendix A – *'Notification to parent/carer of interim care arrangements for child(ren).'*

Procedure

In the event that a child is not collected by a parent or carer the school will:-

- sensitively ask the child (who may already be very anxious) if they know of any reason that could account for their parent/carer being late or have any new or additional contact information, e.g. a recent change of mobile phone number or address;
- make every effort/repeated attempts to contact the parent or carer or named alternative contacts within the first 30 minutes
- it is the responsibility of the class teacher will ensure the child is safe until collection or until SLT deem it appropriate to take over

If the child is not collected after 30 minutes of the end of the school day, after a school activity or at the end of Geccoes, this will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher/DSL or Deputy Headteacher/Deputy DSL. A decision will be made whether it will be suitable for staff to visit the parental home. Further and regular attempts to continue contact with named adults on our contact sheet will continue.

Where contact is made with parent(s) and there appears to be no acceptable reason for not collecting the child, it may be applicable for the school to offer Early Help to the family. In addition, school will undertake a risk assessment. School will make every effort to work with the family to remove barriers and will always have the safety of the child in the centre of any decisions. If the Early Help process or the risk assessment raises concerns, either from phone or face to face contact, the school should inform social care by telephoning the referral & assessment team or, where known, the allocated social worker, and provide them with the following information:-

- brief circumstances of incident, e.g. chaotic home environment and/or the parent(s)/carer(s) appear to be distressed/intoxicated/under the influence of drugs;
- child's details –
 - o name(s)
 - o date of birth
 - o address
 - o gender
 - o ethnicity
 - o religion
 - o language spoken
 - o special dietary needs
 - o behavioural difficulties/medical needs/SEN;
- parent/carer/alternative carer details –
 - o name(s)
 - o address(es)
 - o home/work/mobile telephone numbers;
- any current or previous child protection concerns;
- any previous incidents of not being collected from school

In the event that the child is in immediate need of protection, the police, who have emergency protection powers, will be contacted. If a child is not collected from Geccoes by 6.30pm, a member of the SLT will be informed, and staff will make contact through a home visit before Social Services are contacted. The following information will be provided:

- brief circumstances of incident, i.e. the child has been abandoned;
- child's details –
 - o name(s)
 - o date of birth
 - o address
 - o gender
 - o ethnicity
 - o religion
 - o language spoken
 - o special dietary needs
 - o behavioural difficulties/
- parent/carer/alternative carer details –
 - o name(s)
 - o address(es)
 - o home/work/mobile telephone numbers;
 - any current or previous child protection concerns;
 - any previous incidents of not being collected from school. Social care will give advice and may carry out appropriate checks and make further attempts to contact the parent/carer, although they will normally request that the child remains at school for as long as possible in case the parent/carer arrives late. If there are any concerns about the welfare of the parent/carer, social care will ask the local police to visit the home address.

Plans for transporting the child will depend on local arrangements which should take into account staff availability out of hours, the need for adequate insurance cover, appropriate gender balance, and any information about special needs or behavioural difficulties etc provided by the school. Where possible, two adults should be present. Social care for the school area will liaise with the social care team for the area in which the child resides if this is different.

Persistent Failure to Collect on Time

The office will keep a record of every occasion when parents do not collect a child from school or are late in doing so for no good reason. Any child welfare concerns arising out of such incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection procedures. Instances of the same child/children repeatedly not being collected on time will result in the following procedures:

The parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting with the class teacher to discuss reasons and how support can be provided.

- If the instances continue, the parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher and the possible involvement of the Attendance Consultant and Early Help will be discussed.
- a formal letter may be issued to the parent to reiterate the seriousness of non-collection
- If the situation does not improve, the family will be referred to the Attendance Consultant and/or Social Services, if the situation warrants it.
- school will liaise with the nominated Attendance Officer may be able to offer support, e.g. if the child is known or has been referred to the education welfare service, the attendance consultant could offer to visit the family home to try and establish contact and/or possibly assist a member of school staff in returning the child home.

Please note that if children are not collected at the appropriate time, this may result in a financial charge, as children may have to be put in the care of the Geccoes.

Failure to Collect Children After School Events (outside school hours)

Parents have a duty of care to ensure that their child is collected from after school events (eg discos) at the expected time. If a child is not collected, the parent/carer will be telephoned by the school. If the primary contact is not available, school will endeavour to call all contacts to ensure the child is collected safely. If the school is unable to make any contact, then out of hours social care will be contacted (see above). If a parent/carer fails to collect a child on time for more than two occasions, that child will not be permitted to attend events without the presence of their parent/carer and this will be communicated in writing to the parent/carer.

Major Incidents

If an incident occurs which results in a large number of children not being collected, social care and education welfare may be contacted depending on the circumstances. In these instances, it may be necessary to accommodate the children overnight at a single location until appropriate carers are located.

Managing Parents / Carers Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs

Teachers will need to assess the situation carefully and should immediately alert the Headteacher or other senior staff. If the pupil is thought to be potentially 'at risk' or likely to suffer 'harm' by leaving the school premises with the parent/carer, then the school can, in extreme circumstances, refuse to hand over the pupil – but this can only happen if the parent/carer is in no fit state to take charge of the child. In this situation, other named adults will be contacted and the child will be handed to them to ensure the safety of the child. It is important that the Headteacher / SLT ensure the family engage with Early Help as soon as possible and will make every effort, with no judgement, to support the family. The school's DSL will need to

record both the incident and any resultant actions taken under the local safeguarding procedures.

Parental Access to School Premises and the Principles of the Law of Trespass

Trespass is generally a civil, rather than a criminal, offence. Schools and school grounds are private places, and anyone entering without authority (which might include parents/carers) is trespassing, and may be asked to leave. However, the courts have ruled that parents have an implied license to enter their child's school premises, placing them in a different category from other people who visit or seek to enter a school – but this does not mean that parents/carers are entitled to enter the school at any time they choose. If a parent/carer enters the school at inappropriate times or behaves in such a way that their behaviour is not conducive to the proper function of the school, then their implied license to enter the school premises can be revoked. Thereafter, if they seek to enter the school uninvited, they may be trespassing. Schools can consider seeking an injunction against persistent trespassers, and breach of an injunction is a contempt of court, for which there are substantial penalties – including imprisonment. A trespassing parent/carer who refuses to leave the school premises, or who re-enters after being requested to leave, may be committing an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, which states that someone without authority on school premises who causes a nuisance or disturbance is committing an offence (part 3.6).

Police officers and other 'authorised people' (e.g. a member of staff) can use reasonable force to remove somebody reasonably suspected of committing an offence under section 547 (part 3.7). Causing harassment, alarm or distress to staff or pupils, on or off the school premises, could be an offence under section 154 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (part 4.2).

Threatening, abusing or insulting staff or pupils, on or off the school premises, could be an offence under section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 (part 4.3). However, the Headteacher will consider all the various factors before deciding whether to involve the police in incidents of this nature, e.g. the extent of the challenge to school authority – but if any child is in immediate need of protection, the police must be contacted (see appendix B for contact details).

If the Headteacher wishes to take steps to limit individual parents/carers access to the school premises, further advice will be sought from the legal services department. If a parent/carer is not allowed on school premises, then arrangements must be made by the parent/carer (with the support of the school) to ensure that their child is collected from school at the appropriate time. If this is not put in place, the sanctions above will stand. A parent or carer does not have the right to remove their child from school if they, themselves, are banned from the premises.