

# Late collection procedures

*Date of last review:* October 2016

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*Date of next review:* October 2017



## **Introduction**

The Centre is open from 8am until 6pm from Monday to Friday. These times are strictly adhered to for insurance purposes.

Collecting children on time is important as it makes them feel secure. It also means they get into good routines early on, as punctuality is linked to attainment at school.

Lateness can have a big impact as it affects ratios of staff needed to look after children safely, means some cannot go on mandatory breaks and - most importantly of all - often upsets the child.

## **Procedure for repeated late collection**

In instances of late collection, for any finish time, staff will follow the procedure below:

1. The Centre maintains a 'Late book' in which late collection of more than 5 minutes is noted.
2. All parents/carers sign an agreement on accepting a place at the Centre regarding the conditions on which childcare is offered. This includes a condition that if their child is collected late on an unreasonable number of occasions the place may be withdrawn.
3. The Head or Assistant Head of Centre meets with the parents/carers following late collection on 3 occasions within a month. This is an opportunity to discuss reasons for lateness and propose appropriate action, such as monitoring improvement, as well as reminding parents/carers of the basis on which a place at the Centre is allocated.
4. If the issue continues, with another 3 occasions of late collection within a month, the Head or Assistant Head of Centre will write to the parents/carers urging them to make appropriate arrangements for collecting their child and advising them that it is a condition attached to the child's place to do so.
5. If lateness continues to persist, the Head of Centre will decide whether the place should be withdrawn and seek approval from the governing body.

## **Procedure for late collection at closure**

If a child has not been collected by 6pm, when the Centre is due to close, staff will keep a member of the Senior Leadership Team informed at all times and follow the procedure below:

1. Staff will check with the admin office to find out if a message has been taken regarding anyone being late for collection. If there has been a call from the parents/carers, staff will plan accordingly.
2. Staff will then check the answer machine and Children's Centre email account for any information that may have been left by the parents/carers with regard to them being late that day.
3. If there has been no information regarding the parents/carers being late, staff will call the parents/carers and leave a message if possible.
4. If staff cannot get any response from the parents/carers, staff will call the emergency contacts given to the Centre. All families are asked to provide at least two emergency contacts and at least one should be a landline telephone number.
5. By 6.30pm if there has been no collection or telephone contact agreeing a plan to collect the child, staff will need to call the Children's Social Care Team (CSCT) on 0207 527 7400. (please note that it is important for staff to judge each case on an individual basis and fully consider any mitigating circumstances).
6. The call will be answered by an administrator who will ask a social worker to contact the Centre. Alert them that a child has been left and give the child's name, also give the address and telephone number of the parents at work and at home and details of any emergency or relative contact phone numbers. CSCT will not normally have anyone available to look after the child immediately and will not usually become directly involved until 7.30pm.

7. If possible, staff will leave a message for the parents/carers letting them know that CSCT have been contacted.
8. It is essential that one member of staff is not left alone with a child during any period and at least two staff members should stay with the child throughout.
9. If at any time during this procedure the parent /emergency contact arrives to collect the child, staff will let the CSCT know.
10. If the parents/carers or one of the emergency contacts gets in touch with the Centre to arrange collection, staff will not call to cancel CSCT involvement until the person arrives to collect the child.
11. If the child is not collected and a representative from CSCT needs to collect the child, a member of their team will check the child's home and leave a note for the parent saying how to contact the night duty team, and that their child had to be collected by CSCT as they had been left at the Centre beyond the closing time.
12. Night duty will arrange for alternative care and will telephone the Centre to inform staff of these arrangements.
13. Staff should ensure that the hand-over of the child to the duty social worker takes place in a sensitive and appropriate way, bearing in mind the child's feelings and level of distress. It may be appropriate for the Centre staff to be involved in taking the child to their alternative care.

**Information to be aware of:**

- Staff should not at any time make independent arrangements for the child and should be mindful that there is no legal basis on which they can take alternative action than that described above.
- If staff believe that late collection may be related to issues concerning quality of parenting, such as alcohol or substance mis-use, then CSCT should be informed in the normal way as there may be a need for child protection enquiries.
- When there is failure to collect a child Ofsted requires notification within 14 days of the incident.

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*Related policies: Admissions, Child Protection, Safeguarding*