



Victoria Park

Primary Academy

Late Collection Policy

Aims

This policy is for use by school staff and to aid decisions made by the DSL in any case where:

1. children are collected late
2. children are not collected
3. it is not safe for children to go home unaccompanied
4. there are concerns about supervision before and after school (childcare by a sibling/child walking to or from school alone)
5. there are concerns about a parent/carer's ability to offer safe care, because they are under the influence of alcohol/drugs or there are concerns about their mental health state

Admissions Information

When a child starts at the school, parents/carers will be given information on the school day and routines, as well as expectations around punctuality of drop off and collection of children. It will be made clear that school staff are responsible for the children during school opening hours, but they have other commitments once their teaching day has finished.

Parents/carers will be made aware of any other relevant policies/guidance in place, in accordance with the school's child protection policy, including information relating to:

1. children walking to/from school alone
2. a sibling accompanying a child to/from school on a parent's behalf
3. what will happen if the parents/carers are late to collect their child
4. what will happen if the parents/carers fail to collect their child
5. what will happen if parents/carers are not considered able to offer safe care of their child (e.g. due to drugs/alcohol/poor mental health)

It is essential that all key information is collected from parents/ carers when a child is first registered at Victoria Park Academy. This should include:

1. Names and full addresses of parents/carers (including confirmation of parental responsibility/ private fostering arrangements* and copies of any legal orders)
2. Information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child (and copies of any relevant legal orders etc)
3. Home address and telephone number/s
4. Place of work and work telephone number/s
5. Mobile phone numbers where appropriate
6. Emergency contacts who may be called in the event of the parents/carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency (at least 3 numbers is good practice)

Suitable person / Identification of Individuals

It is essential that parents nominate a responsible person to pick up their child if they are unable to do so themselves.

Collection by older siblings / relatives

There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child, however it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. This can include in the care of an older sibling if the level of supervision is 'likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (Children and Young Persons Act, 1933). Therefore parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that should go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

The suitability of a sibling caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case by case basis, by a judgment of the potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected; the length and nature of the journey home, the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected. Please see checklist within this section for further factors to consider.

The NSPCC recommend that no one under 16 should be left to care for a younger child. Therefore, at Victoria Park Academy we will not release a child to a sibling younger than 16 years.

Unsuitable collection

If staff feel that the person collecting a child may be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs and the safety and wellbeing of the child may be compromised, a member of the schools Senior Leadership Team must be contacted.

The member of the Senior Leadership Team will assess the situation and if they feel that the parent/carer appears unable to take responsibility for the child they will take appropriate action. This could include contacting another person named on the emergency contact list or suitable member of the family to collect the child. If another emergency contact or family member is not available then Children's Social Care or the Police may need to be contacted.

Procedure to be followed if a pupil is not collected

Parents and carers share in the responsibility to work with staff to ensure their children are safe and in the care of a responsible adult. Parents must notify the school immediately if it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child may be late

If a pupil is not collected at the end of the school day or after attending after school clubs it is important to establish with the pupil what their understanding of the arrangement was and try to contact anyone on the child's emergency contact list if parents are unavailable.

The teacher or appropriate member of staff will:

1. Check the pupil's Home/School Link Book or Homework Diary (where applicable).
2. Check whether they are usually in an after school activity that night and have just forgotten to attend. (Where applicable).
3. Check with office staff to see whether a phone call or note has been received.
4. Check in the register for a note.
5. Continue calling the parent (or ask office staff to do so). Contact numbers are kept in the office. Please ensure that the office staff are aware that you are trying to contact a parent.
6. If an answer phone is used please leave a short message to say the day and time, that you are ringing, that you still have X with you and they must contact the school immediately to say when the pupil is to be collected.
7. If a parent has not made contact or arrived by 3.50.p.m. or 10 minutes after the end of an after school club a further phone call should be made and where available, a message left to inform the parents that a referral is being made to Children's Social Care ACCESS service if no call is received within 10 minutes.
8. If the child is not collected and no contact is made by 4.00 p.m. or 20 minutes after the end of an after school club, a referral will be made to the ACCESS service on 0845 351 0131.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility (including siblings, if appropriate and in line with school policy), whether this is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent/carer must put this in writing. In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent/carer must give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home. This must be recorded and we will write to the parent/carer to confirm that this arrangement was made at their request and with their consent.

Follow-up

If a pupil is picked up late this will be recorded in the pupil record and on the lates register, giving reasons for the late pick-up.

Once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain what the parent must do to avoid a recurrence of this situation.

It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure that they worked smoothly and if necessary to amend for future incidents.

Non collection

In the event that a child is not collected from school by an authorised adult and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty minutes to one hour of the usual collection time,

the school will follow child protection procedures, i.e. Police will be informed and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made.

The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken and calls made and under no circumstances should staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them.

A letter to be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put into place for their child and to invite them in for a discussion about their individual circumstances. Once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain whether there is anything that the school could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation. It may be necessary to discuss with the parent steps that they could take to avoid recurrence e.g. ensuring that the school has current contact details etc. It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure that they worked smoothly and if necessary to amend for future incidents.

Further Information and Appendix

Appendix 1a Sample letter for use when a child is collected late from school

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL LOGO

Dear [parent/carer],

As you are aware, [child] was collected late from school on [date]. I would like to remind you that, in order to keep your child/ren safe, the school 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 xxx minutes, or fail to make suitable alternative collection arrangements this may lead to school contacting Police and Children's Services.

Please do speak to either myself 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,

XXXXXXXX

Appendix 2 Sample letter for use when child is not collected from school

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL LOGO

Dear [Parent/Carer],

[Child's name] was not collected from school on [day / date] and we were unable to contact you or the emergency contact(s). In circumstances where children are not collected at the end of the school day or school activity, the school is obliged to work within local procedures for keeping children safe and this resulted in the school contacting Children's Services and Police.

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

Yours sincerely

LATE COLLECTION LOG

For use by Designated Senior Lead every time a parent/carer is more than 20 minutes late to collect a child at the end of the school day / session / activity.

This log should be held on the child's 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 given for late/no collection:	
External agencies contacted? If so who?	Arrangements made:
Follow up actions:	
Signature of DSP:	

Appendix 4 : Useful links

Legislation

Children's Act 2004

Children's Act 1989

Children and Young Person Act 1933 Education Act 2002

www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/legislation.shtml Occupier's Liability Acts 1957 and 1984

All available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

Guidance

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES 2007
http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/national.shtml

This document sets out the responsibilities of all local authorities, schools and further education (FE) institutions in England to safeguard and promote the

welfare of children. It sets out recruitment best practice, some underpinned by legislation, for the school, local authority, and FE sectors

Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF 2010
http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/national.shtml

Working Together sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. Part 1 of the document is issued as statutory guidance.

Research

"Please keep an eye on your younger sister": sibling supervision and young children's risk of unintentional injury, Morrongiello, Shell and Schmidt, Injury Prevention, August 2010

<http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/16/6/398.abstract>

Parental supervision reduces young children's risk of unintentional injuries, but supervision by older siblings has been shown to increase risk. The current study explored how this differential risk of injury may arise.

[Guidance /resources and websites by other organisations](#)

HCC cannot accept any liability for the content of those listed under this heading and any questions or queries about these should be raised directly with the organisation responsible.

Is it legal? A families' guide to the law , Family and Parenting Institute
http://www.familyandparenting.org/Resources/FPI/Documents/Is%20it%20legal_%20guide%20Accessible%20.pdf

The laws affecting children and families are numerous and can be confusing. Myths about what age a child can be left alone are common. Yet it is essential for families and for those who work with families to understand the legal framework; to know the basics about childcare, parents' and partners' rights and children in trouble. This edition offers clarification of the law for families and all those who work with them. It includes a fully updated helpfile, a full list of sources of further information on all the main areas affecting families.

NSPCC Home alone: your guide to keeping your child safe
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/home_alone_wda73922.html

There is no legal age at which children may be left home alone, but parents can be prosecuted for neglect if it puts them at risk of injury or suffering. This leaflet gives sound professional advice and useful tips to help parents decide in what situations they may leave their children home alone, and what they need to do to ensure their safety and wellbeing. It also advises how to make sure children can safely use the internet. It explains the risks of leaving babies and younger children unattended, and provides helpful advice on what qualities and experience to look for when choosing a babysitter or child-minder. A useful resource for any service or professional offering parenting advice to new parents and those caring for young children or teenagers.

NSPCC Out alone: your guide to keeping your child safe
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/outalone_wda65316.html Getting the balance right between allowing children their independence and ensuring their safety when away from home can be difficult. Out alone provides professional advice and practical tips to parents on how to prepare children for being out on their own, whether it's when walking to and from school, attending sports or holiday clubs, or getting involved in other community activities. It explains the importance of telling children from a very young age what to do if they get lost, and the dangers of allowing pre-teen children to go out on their own. It also gives advice on what anyone should do when noticing a child being bullied, ill-treated or in distress. A useful resource for any service or professional offering parenting advice to those caring for young children or teenagers.

Living Streets: Walk to School Campaign

<http://www.walktoschool.org.uk/get-involved/parents/faqs/>

Walk to School is a campaign run by national charity Living Streets. The campaign encourages primary school children and their parents to leave the car at home and walk to school. The weblink contains a list of issues frequently faced by parents around walking to school

Family Lives: Walk to School

<http://familylives.org.uk/free-resources/multimedia/walking-school>

Visit Family Lives (previously Parentline Plus) and take part in an interactive e-learning module produced in partnership with Living Streets, all about walking to school.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

<http://www.rosipa.com/childsafety/inthehome/>

Advice, information and resources for safety practitioners, parents, teachers and other professionals who work with children about child safety on the road, in the home and at play.

NSPCC

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

School is a great opportunity for reaching out to children and young people, as this is where they spend a lot of their time. The NSPCC website has a number resources and tools that schools can use to make school a more positive experience for children.

Useful contact numbers

ACCESS Service (children's social care) – 0845 351 0131

West Midlands Police Communications Centre – 0845 113 5000