

## **Enfield Local Safeguarding Children Board**

### **Children not collected at the end of the school day Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Review Date** Autumn 2019

#### **Executive Summary**

This procedure has been developed by a group of primary school headteacher representatives together with representatives from Education and Social Care Services and the Police. It is in response to the increasing number of incidents reported by schools where children have been left at school and not collected until long after the end of the school day.

There are demands on teachers at all levels to be involved with professional matters beyond the end of the school day that mean that supervision in these circumstances is problematical.

Such incidents cause distress to children. Clear guidance is needed so that schools can deal with these instances confidently, not least through receiving support from other agencies. A consistent defined approach will also enable schools to give reassurance to the children involved. It is recognised that situations occur where children are not collected occasionally for reasons beyond their parents' control, such as a traffic accident. This guidance is intended to help children parents/carers and professionals in these situations.

It includes:

School responsibilities

Action to be taken by school staff

Children and Families Service procedure for children uncollected from school

Action by Children and Families Service for children living in the borough of Enfield

Action by Children and Families Service for children living in other Authorities

Children uncollected from After School Clubs

The knowledge that a procedure exists for managing such problems should give reassurance to parents/carers that the welfare of their children is assured.

#### ***School Responsibilities***

To ensure that parents/carers are notified periodically of the start and end time of the school day.

1. To instigate a system of regular updates of family/carer information, contact numbers and emergency contact numbers. This can be done by:

- Sending out slips requesting confirmation or updating of contact information. e.g. annually
- Any other suitable system of communications already established by any particular school.

Please be aware of the needs to make adequate arrangements for parents whose first language is not English.

3 To ensure that relevant parental contact numbers are known and accessible to staff in the school who might need them.

4. To ensure that all children, staff and parents know where children will wait if they are not collected on time.

5. To ensure the policy and procedures for children not collected at the end of the school day are known to the parents. This can be done by: • Including the information in the school prospectus/brochure

- Reminders in school newsletters to parents to include guidance on what steps parents should take and who they should contact in the event that their child has not been collected and on late presentation at the school they are unable to gain access.

This information should include advice to families that:

- They should contact school as soon as a delay is anticipated.
- To ensure they make adequate alternative collection and supervision arrangements of their children if possible. ( and inform school)
- That school will keep a record of children not collected and the reasons given for the delay. The collecting adult to sign the record on collection. To inform them that procedures are in place to inform Children Services and the Police if parents persistently collect their children late without contact with schools. **This procedure may lead initially to a meeting with the Safer Schools Police Officer or a possible referral to Children & Families Social Care and involve the parents in collecting their children from the Children & Family Service**

### ***Action to be taken by school staff***

Children who are not collected at the end of the school day, will be taken, by their teacher to a designated area within the school. Individual schools will decide where this area should be.

Children should be signed in by the teacher and signed out by the collecting adult with the reason for the delay indicated.

If parents persistently collect their children late from school a letter will be sent to the parent explaining the concerns. (Appendix 1)

If the school has not been contacted within a reasonable time, (suggested 15 minutes after the end of the school day) a staff member must try to contact the parent and emergency contact numbers held by the school. These actions and their outcomes must be recorded. If the school is unable to make contact with the parent or emergency contact and an hour has elapsed since the end of the school day, a referral to Children and Families Service should be made by phone on **0208 379 5555**. This referral should be made no later than 4.15 pm. This contact will alert children's social care that a child has not been collected by their parent. The child's full details including name D.O.B. address and all contact numbers must be provided to Children and Families Services at the time of the call.

Where children are taken to Children's Social care offices, the school will make efforts to inform parents/carers of the action that has been taken, by delivering a letter to the home address on the same day of the event (Appendix 3) and leaving a letter in a prominent place at the school (Appendix 2) These actions will be recorded on the child's file for future reference by School. The letter should inform of the action taken and give a number for the parents/carers to contact Children and Families Services.

### ***Children and Families Service Procedure for Children Uncollected from School***

In some situations children are uncollected as a result of unforeseen circumstances, for example a traffic accident. In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of parents to contact the school to inform them of the situation, when the child is likely to be collected and make other appropriate arrangements. In other situations children are uncollected from school as a result of parents not giving appropriate priority to arrangements for their children and not appreciating their children's needs for a reliable and secure routine. Children not collected may feel neglected or fearful due to uncertainty about when they will be collected and uncertainty about why their parent is late. If this becomes a regular occurrence this could be detrimental to the child and have an impact on their emotional wellbeing in these circumstances this policy and procedure will be applied.

Most schools end their days between 3.00 and 3.30 p.m. Some operate after school clubs, which would generally end between 5.30 - 6 p.m. Schools **do not** have a

responsibility to make arrangements to care for children after the end of the school day.

### ***Preliminary Action by Schools***

Following adoption of the policy, schools will write to all parents to inform them clearly of action which will be taken if their children are uncollected from school, stating that contact **will** be made with Children and Families Services.

Where parents persistently collect their children late, a letter will be sent to them advising them that this is not acceptable. Each individual school will be responsible for relevant action/sanction for persistent offenders.

Schools have a responsibility to maintain up to date lists of contact details for parents and carers and ideally third party emergency contacts to be contacted in such events where the parents cannot be reached despite multiple attempts. When children are uncollected, schools will make every effort to contact carers using this information.

If the child(ren) remain uncollected and no contact can be made with parents/carers, schools will need to take further action to resolve the situation. If children remain uncollected by 4.15 PM, schools should contact Children and Families Services. If the child(ren) are already known to a social worker, the school should contact the allocated worker directly. If the child(ren) are unknown to Children and Families Services, then a referral should be made to the **SPOE via telephone 020 8379 5000**.

### ***Action by Children and Families Services***

On receipt of a telephone referral from school, details of the child's emergency contact numbers will be shared. The Social worker will liaise with the school, and relevant information known about the child(ren) and family by both agencies will be exchanged.

The social worker will continue to make attempts to call parents and any family members listed as emergency contacts whilst further information and checks are undertaken in relation to known history. This joint and continued effort should take place whilst the child/ren remains in the care of school staff. A decision will then be made at the point at which all efforts to contact parents have reached an end and the school can no longer continue to care for the children due to the school day coming to an end that further action is needed. This allows every opportunity for parents to arrive at school and minimise the negative experience for the child.

An agreement should be reached about the child/ren being brought to children's social care offices ideally by school staff who know the child well and are familiar. If there are reasons as to why this cannot happen arrangements should be made for children's social care to collect the child/ren from school.

Children's Social Care will continue to try and make contact with the parents whilst child/ren are being brought to children's social care offices. A home visit may be undertaken by the School in discussion with children's social care and would need to consider if this was safe and appropriate to do so. At this time the social worker may need to undertake a home visit or be looking at alternative family members and as a last resort securing emergency accommodation for the child/ren if we continue to be unable to make contact with parents.

Children will only be accommodated in Local Authority accommodation as a last resort after it has been demonstrated that this is in the best interest of the child and that no other alternatives exist.

Following accommodation of the child(ren), continued efforts will be made to contact parents/carers.

The social worker will liaise with the school as soon as possible to update the school regarding the resolution of the incident and discuss any further welfare issues concerning the child(ren).

If children are in the care of children's social services the school will make efforts to inform parents/carers of the action that has been taken and include how to make contact with children's services. These actions will be recorded on the child's file for future reference by Children and Families Services or School.

### ***Children Living in Other Authorities***

Children attending an Enfield School but who are resident in another Local Authority are the responsibility of that Local Authority and schools must make contact with the relevant borough. If the school is experiencing difficulties in making contact with the relevant borough the SPOE can be contacted to support in trying to make contact and offer advice and assistance where appropriate and necessary.

### ***Children Uncollected from activities***

A number of after school facilities operate in Enfield, operated by a variety of organisations including private and voluntary organisations and private companies. The issues for children uncollected from these facilities are very similar to those for children uncollected from school. It is suggested that this procedure should also apply to children uncollected from after school clubs. Children not collected from such activities should be referred to the **Emergency Duty Team on 0208379 1000**.

## **Implementation Plan**

1. Policy circulated to all primary and special needs schools in Enfield.
2. Following receipt of the policy, schools will inform parents/carers of the policy

2. Schools may implement this as soon as parents/ carers have been informed.

## Appendix 1a



London Borough of Enfield

# PRINCE OF WALES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr Jan M Bless Salisbury Road

School Tel: 01992 762840

School Fax: 01992 764512

E-mail: office@princeofwales.enfield.sch.uk

Autumn 2019

Enfield  
Middlesex  
EN3 6HG

Dear

I am writing to you to remind you of the school's policy for children not collected at the end of the school day as stated in the school leaflet.

Yesterday your child was not collected at the end of the school day for the second time in.....weeks/months without contact from you or an acceptable explanation for the delay. This was not only very distressing for..... but prevented my staff member *from performing other duties or returning to their own family.*

As your child was not collected until ..... you have incurred a ..... fine. This has been added to your Parent Pay account and should be paid within three working days.

If ..... is again left at the end of the school day without contact or an acceptable reason for the delay, I will be inviting you to a meeting with a member of the Police Safer Schools Section and myself to discuss how this matter may be resolved.

I would ask again that you make every effort to prevent further distress for ..... by collecting ...her/him/them promptly at the end of the school day.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jan Bless  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 1b



London Borough of Enfield

# PRINCE OF WALES

PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Headteacher:** Mr Jan M Bless

**School Tel:** 01992 762840

**School Fax:** 01992 764512

**E-mail:** office@princeofwales.enfield.sch.uk

Salisbury Road

Enfield

Middlesex

EN3 6HG

December 2018

Dear

I am writing to you to remind you of the school's policy for children not collected at the end of the school day as stated in the school leaflet.

Yesterday your child was not collected at the end of the school day for the second time in.....*weeks/months* without contact from you or an acceptable explanation for the delay. This was not only very distressing for..... but prevented my staff member *from performing other duties or returning to their own family.*

As your child was not collected until ..... you have incurred a ..... fine. This has been added to your Parent Pay account and should be paid within three working days.

If ..... is again left at the end of the school day without contact or an acceptable reason for the delay, I will be inviting you to a meeting with a member of the Police Safer Schools Section and myself to discuss how this matter may be resolved.

The length of time ..... was left at school came very close to the point at which our policy suggests we should be seeking the assistance of social workers within Children's Services of the Social Care to assume responsibility for your child until he/she can be returned to you.

I would ask again that you make every effort to prevent further distress for

..... by collecting ...her/him/them promptly at the end of the school day.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jan Bless  
Head Teacher

**Appendix 2 (Please note do not change Dear Parent /Carer to specific names to maintain confidentiality. The parent/carer will know who they are.)**



London Borough of Enfield

**PRINCE OF WALES**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Headteacher:** Mr Jan M Bless  
**School Tel:** 01992 762840  
**School Fax:** 01992 764512  
**E-mail:** office@princeofwales.enfield.sch.uk

Salisbury Road  
Enfield  
Middlesex  
EN3 6HG

December 2018

**Dear Parent/Carer**

**As you did not collect your child within an acceptable time, and all attempts to contact you were unsuccessful the procedure laid out in our school leaflet has been implemented.**

**Your child is now in the care of Children and Families Service of Social Care. Please contact immediately on:**

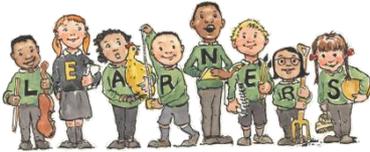
**0208 379 -1000 (Emergency Duty Team) - out of hours 5pm -9am.**

**0208 379 – 5000 ( MASH) – 9am – 5pm.**

Yours sincerely

Mr Jan Bless  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 3



**Headteacher:** Mr Jan M Bless  
**School Tel:** 01992 762840  
**School Fax:** 01992 764512  
**E-mail:** office@princeofwales.enfield.sch.uk

London Borough of Enfield

## PRINCE OF WALES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salisbury Road  
Enfield  
Middlesex  
EN3 6HG

December 2018

Dear

As your child was uncollected at the end of the school day and we were unable to make contact with you using the contact numbers you provided.

You have been informed in the school leaflet and reminded in our newsletters that it is the school policy to refer to Children and Families Service in such cases. Therefore .....is now being looked after by the London Borough of Enfield's Children and Families Service. In compliance with section 20 of the Children Act 1989 your child was determined to have been, either abandoned or the carer was deemed to have temporarily or permanently been unable to provide suitable care and accommodation at that time.

**Please contact Children and Families Service**

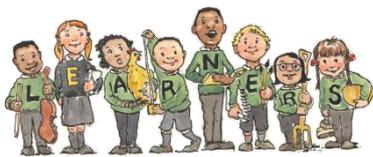
**0208 379 1000 (Emergency Duty Team) out of hours 5pm -9am.**

**0208 379 5000 –9am – 5pm.**

Yours sincerely

Mr Jan Bless  
Head Teacher

**Appendix 4** (a letter template)



London Borough of Enfield

**PRINCE OF WALES**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Headteacher:** Mr Jan M Bless

**School Tel:** 01992 762840

**School Fax:** 01992 764512

**E-mail:** office@princeofwales.enfield.sch.uk

Salisbury Road  
Enfield  
Middlesex

28th November 2018

EN3 6HG

**Dear Parent/Carer**

**Local Safeguarding Children Board policy and Procedures for Children not collected at the end of the school day**

Prince of Wales school has now adopted the above named London Borough of Enfield policy and procedure to safeguard children not collected at the end of the school day where no contact has been made with the school with an acceptable explanation for the delay. It is recognised that situations occur where children are not collected occasionally for reasons beyond their parents' control, such as a traffic accident. This procedure is intended to help parents and carers in these situations. The knowledge that a procedure exists for managing such problems should give reassurance that the welfare of their children is assured.

However, it is very distressing for children to be left at the end of the school day. Parents / carers who persistently collect their children late will be contacted and invited to a meeting with a member of the Police Safer Schools Section and myself to discuss how this matter may be resolved. We take very seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of your children and trust the parents / carers of children attending this school will make adequate

arrangements for the timely collection of their children at the end of the school day.

Should your child/ren be left at school without contact from you and we are unable to contact you on any of the home or emergency numbers you have given, procedures are in place as follows: A referral will be made to the Children and Families Service. Your child/ren will be looked after by social workers from this service until you contact them, and arrangements can be made to return them to your care.

It is hoped that all children will be collected at the end of the day and that the above procedures will not have to be invoked. A copy of the policy and procedures can be viewed at school.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jan M Bless  
Headteacher