

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Uncollected child

Policy statement

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. If a child is not collected by an authorised adult at their expected collection time, we follow clear, robust safeguarding procedures.

Our aim is to minimise distress, ensure the child remains safe and supervised, and take appropriate action where a child may be at risk.

Parents and carers are informed of this policy during induction so that they understand our responsibilities and the procedures we will follow.

September 2026 statutory and local update

- This procedure reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers in force from 1 September 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the London Child Protection Procedures and Bromley safeguarding arrangements.
- The EYFS requires providers to make their procedure for a parent/carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time available to parents/carers.

Information Required From Parents

Before a child starts, parents must provide full and accurate information on the Registration Form, including:

- full home address and all contact numbers;
- mobile phone numbers;
- email address (for emergency written permissions if required);
- place of work and work contact numbers (if applicable);
- names, addresses, telephone numbers and photographs of all authorised adults allowed to collect the child;
- confirmation of all adults who have parental responsibility;
- details of any adults who must not have access to or collect the child (with supporting legal documentation where applicable).
- Parents must update the setting immediately if contact details or authorised adults change.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

- In line with the EYFS, emergency contact details for parents/carers must be held and kept up to date. Where possible, the setting should hold more than two emergency contact numbers for each child.
- Parents/carers are asked to review contact and collection information regularly and to notify the setting immediately of changes to parental responsibility, court orders, collection permissions or emergency contacts.

Planned Alternative Collection Arrangements

If parents know in advance that they will not collect their child:

- They must provide written notification (email/text from their registered number is acceptable).
- The message must clearly state:
 - the name of the authorised adult collecting the child,
 - their relationship to the child,
 - their contact number.
- Staff verify the identity of the collection adult using the agreed password and photo ID. No child will be released to any adult without correct verification.

When a Parent is Delayed Unexpectedly

Parents must contact the setting as soon as possible on the main setting number:
07876 480617

The Manager will reassure parents, make arrangements for safe collection and keep the child supervised by two members of staff until collected.

Procedure When a Child is Not Collected on Time

If an authorised adult has not collected the child by the expected collection time, the following steps are taken:

Step 1 – Check Records

- Staff check the child's file for any updated collection arrangements or messages.

Step 2 – Attempt to Contact Parents

- Attempt all parent/carer contact numbers repeatedly.

Step 3 – Contact Authorised Adults

- If parents cannot be reached, staff call all authorised adults listed on the child's registration form.

Step 4 – The Child Must Not Leave With Anyone Not Authorised

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

- Under no circumstances is the child released to anyone who is not authorised in writing.

Step 5 – After 30 Minutes

If no contact has been made with any parent or authorised adult within 30 minutes:

- Begin uncollected child safeguarding procedures.
- Staff consider the possibility of neglect or abandonment, demonstrating professional curiosity.

Step 6 – Contact Bromley Children's Social Care

If no adult can be contacted:

- The 30- and 45-minute points in this policy are operational prompts, not a reason to delay safeguarding action. If staff have any reason to believe the child is at immediate risk, has been abandoned, or the parent/carer may be at risk, the DSL/Manager will contact Children's Social Care and/or police immediately.

Bromley Children's Social Care (MASH):

020 8461 7373 / 7379 / 7026

If social care is unavailable:

Bromley Out-of-Hours Duty Team:

0300 303 8671

If neither can be reached:

Police – 999 (immediate risk)

Police – 101 (non-emergency)

Step 7 – After 45 Minutes

- Contact Children's Social Care or police again if no contact has been made.

Care of the Child During the Incident

- The child remains on the premises at all times.
- The child is cared for by two fully vetted members of staff, one of whom is the Manager or Deputy.
- Staff offer reassurance and maintain a calm, supportive environment.
- Concerns or adult conversations must not be discussed within the child's hearing.
- Staff never leave the premises to search for parents.

If Children's Social Care take responsibility for the child, staff will follow their instructions.

- Staff will not take the child home themselves or transport the child to another address unless this has been expressly authorised as part of an agreed safeguarding arrangement.
- Any transfer of care to Children's Social Care or police will be fully recorded, including the name, role and contact details of the professional receiving the child and the time of handover.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Safeguarding and Recording Responsibilities

- All attempts to contact parents and authorised adults must be recorded with times, numbers called and outcomes.
- A full written incident report is stored securely in the child's safeguarding file.
- The DSL reviews the incident to determine whether a child protection referral is needed due to potential neglect or abandonment.
- The Manager notifies:
 - Ofsted: The Manager/DSL will consider whether the circumstances amount to a significant event affecting the childcare. Where notification is required, Ofsted must be informed as soon as possible and always within 14 days using the current GOV.UK "Report a serious childcare incident" service.

Repeated incidents may trigger a professional meeting with the family.

- A safeguarding referral made about an individual child is not, by itself, an Ofsted-notifiable event. The Manager/DSL will separately consider whether the circumstances are a significant event that must be notified to Ofsted.
- Repeated late or failed collections will be reviewed for patterns and wider indicators of neglect, parental vulnerability or family difficulty. Where appropriate, the setting will consider early help as well as statutory safeguarding referral routes.

Fees and Charges

Where parents repeatedly fail to collect their child on time without reasonable explanation, or where staff are required to remain on duty beyond normal hours, the provider reserves the right to charge for additional staffing costs, as stated in the setting's fee policy.

This is not applied in emergencies where parents have made reasonable efforts to contact the setting.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually as part of the safeguarding audit and following any incident where procedures have been implemented.

Learning from incidents is used to strengthen practice and staff training.