

Safe Collection and Uncollected Child Policy

Policy Statement

At Bunyan Preschool we are committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and well-being of all children in our care. We expect children to be collected promptly by their parents, carers or other authorised adults at the agreed collection times. In the event that a child is not collected on time, or if an adult arrives who is deemed unfit or unsafe to collect a child, clear procedures are in place to ensure the child is safeguarded and experiences as little distress as possible.

Parents and carers are made aware of these procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they can be reassured that their child will be properly cared for until safe collection arrangements are made.

General Collection Arrangements

Children will only be released to:

- Their parent/carer, or another authorised adult named in advance by the parent/carer.
- Staff must be satisfied that the adult collecting the child is fit to do so and that releasing the child will not place them at risk.
- No sibling or family member under the age of 16 may collect a child from the setting.

Arriving Late to Collect a Child

If a parent or carer arrives late to collect their child (after 12pm or 3pm), Bunyan Preschool reserves the right to charge a late collection fee and the following procedures will apply:

- Staff will record the time the parent or carer arrives to collect their child on the register.
- On the first occurrence of lateness, the incident will be recorded by the member of staff on door duty.
- A late collection charge will apply 10 minutes after the end of each session:
 - £10 for the first 10 minutes
 - £1 for every additional minute thereafter
- Any late collection fees incurred must be paid within 7 days of receipt of invoice.

If a child has not been collected by 12:15pm or 3:15pm and no communication has been received from the parent or carer, the Uncollected Child Procedures outlined below will be followed.

Information Required from Parents

Parents are required to provide the following information when their child starts attending the setting (recorded on the Registration Form):

- Home address and telephone number (or an alternative emergency contact if no telephone is available).
- Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
- Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers of adults authorised to collect the child.
- Details of who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.

Vigilance and Observation at Collection

Staff are expected to remain vigilant at all collection times. Indicators that may cause concern include (but are not limited to):

- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Smell of alcohol or other substances
- Unsteady movement or poor coordination
- Aggressive, confused or inappropriate behaviour
- Appearance or behaviour inconsistent with the adult's usual presentation

A single indicator alone does not automatically mean a child cannot be released. Decisions will be based on overall presentation and professional judgement.

Procedure When a Concern Is Identified at Collection

If any member of staff has a concern about an adult collecting a child:

Immediate escalation

- The concern must be shared immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Emma Copperwheat or, in their absence, the Deputy DSL Barbara Włodarczyk.
- The DSL will assess the situation at the point of collection, considering:
 - Observable signs
 - Behaviour and communication
 - Explanations provided
 - Any immediate risk to the child

Second opinion

- Where possible, the DSL will seek a second opinion from another senior member of staff before making a decision.

Decision-making

- Decisions will be proportionate, evidence-based and focused on the child's immediate safety.

If an Adult Is Deemed Not Fit to Collect

If the DSL determines that an adult is not fit to safely collect a child:

- The child will not be released to that adult.
- The DSL will contact another authorised adult to collect the child, the child will remain safely at the setting until alternative arrangements are made.
- If concerns escalate and the child may be at immediate risk, Children's Social Care or the police will be contacted for advice.

Uncollected Child Procedures

If a child is not collected at their expected collection time:

- The child's file will be checked for any changes to normal collection arrangements.
- Parents/carers will be contacted at home, work and via mobile.
- If unsuccessful, authorised emergency contacts will be contacted.
- All reasonable attempts will be made to contact parents or nominated carers.
- The child will not leave the premises with anyone not named on the Registration Form.

If no one arrives within 30 minutes of the expected collection time and no contact can be made:

- The setting will follow safeguarding procedures for uncollected children.
- If there is reason to believe the child has been abandoned, the local authority Children's Social Care team will be contacted.
- If Children's Social Care is unavailable, the police will be contacted.
- After an additional 15 minutes, statutory agencies will be contacted again if the child remains uncollected.

The child will remain at the setting until they are safely collected by a parent, an authorised adult, or a social care worker. Under no circumstances will staff leave the premises with the child or attempt to locate parents themselves.

The child will be reassured, kept comfortable and cared for appropriately. Concerns will not be discussed in front of the child.

Recording and Reporting

- A full written record of any late collection, uncollected child incident or concern regarding collection will be completed on the same day.
- Records will include:
 - What was observed
 - Who was involved
 - Actions taken
 - Rationale for decisions
- Records are stored securely in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.
- Ofsted may be informed where appropriate.

Post-Incident Review

Where concerns arise either before or after a child has been released:

- The DSL will review the incident.
- Advice may be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or safeguarding partners.
- Procedures will be reviewed and updated as a learning measure if required.

Confidentiality

- Information about children, families and safeguarding matters is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- Sensitive information, including Child Protection Plan status, will only be shared when appropriate and with relevant authorities.

Staff Training and Awareness

- All staff receive safeguarding training, including guidance on safe and appropriate collection of children.
- Refresher training is provided regularly and whenever policies are updated.

Bunyan