

**London Borough of Sutton
Policy and Guidance for Schools and other Children's Services
Providers**

**Protocol to be followed when a child is not collected at the end of the
school day, or from other children's services provision or settings.**

1 Introduction

- 1.1** Section 175 Education Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) and Governing Bodies of schools, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This duty should include having arrangements for dealing with children who are not collected at the end of the school day, following an authorised school activity, or at the end of another childcare activity or provision.
- 1.2** Schools and settings have a duty of care towards Primary and Nursery pupils who are left in school and not collected by their parent or nominated deputy after the school day has finished. The duty of care remains until the child has been collected. Responsibility for the child still lies with the parent.
- 1.3** This policy has been written and agreed between Children, Young People and Learning Services, Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Board, Local Authority Schools, the Private, Voluntary and Independent providers and the Metropolitan Police.

2 Nothing in this protocol changes the responsibilities of each agency as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'The London Child Protection Procedures'¹

3 Prevention

- 3.1** Where children are collected late from school on a regular basis, the school should follow the matter up with the parent(s) / carer(s), and involve other support agencies where appropriate. However, there will be the occasions when parents/carers fail to collect a child due to an accident, illness or other emergency which will result in the child not being able to go home at the end of the day. On these occasions, it is important that a protocol is available which will enable the child to be looked after in a safe and welcoming environment.
- 3.2** This protocol should be brought to the attention of parents/carers, in writing, when their child first starts at the school / setting. The protocol should also be referred to in the setting's child protection policy and procedures of which staff and parents should also be made aware.
- 3.3** The school / setting agrees to care for a pupil who has not been collected until such time as he/she is collected by a parent/carers, or appropriate alternative arrangements are made with social care and/or police to ensure the child's

¹ Fourth edition 2010, for full procedures go to www.londonscb.gov.uk

safety.

- 3.4** The school's designated person for child protection will keep a record of incidents where parents do not collect a child from school, are late in doing so for no good reason, or where this is a repeat occurrence. Any child welfare concerns arising out of such an incident(s) will be dealt with, through completion of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and in accordance with the school's child protection procedures.
- 3.5** In the unlikely event that the child is in immediate need of protection, the police, who have police protection powers, will be contacted.
- 3.6** The guiding principle in dealing with any situation in which a child is not collected from school must be to minimise distress to the child, and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people.
- 3.7** Please note that there will be very few occasions when this procedure is needed.
- 3.8** Discretion should be used with these procedures in exceptional circumstances such as major disasters or unexpected early closures.

4 Parental Information

- 4.1** On admission to school or other setting, parents / carers should provide accurate information about:
- Who holds parental responsibility; their names, addresses and telephone numbers.
 - Two or three emergency contact persons and telephone numbers.
 - Details of others permitted to collect a child, as well as copies of any orders preventing persons collecting children
 - Details of any locally agreed process for the collection of children, such as a secret password
- 4.2** Where a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the setting should also keep up to date contact details for the allocated social worker
- 4.3** Settings must ensure that parents are provided with information about the times of the school day / provision, and the expectation regarding the delivery and collection of children.
- 4.4** *This information should be updated at least annually and parents must be told of the need to inform the Head Teacher / setting manager if there are changes to the details given on admission.*
- 4.5** If a telephone number does not work schools / settings should follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the parent/carer.
- 5 Action if a child is not collected**
- 5.1** Initial attempt to contact parents/carers should be made when **15 minutes** have elapsed after school / provision closing time.

- 5.2 *Where a child is subject to a Child Protection plan, their allocated Social Worker, or duty Social Worker, should be contacted immediately.*
- 5.3 If the parent/carer has failed to contact the establishment to explain that they are going to be late, an adult should telephone all the contact numbers (including emergency numbers) available for that child and make every effort to make contact with a responsible adult to ensure the pupil is collected.
- 5.4 Appendix A is an example letter that could form a suggested 'script' for a message, or could be hand delivered to the child's home.
- 5.5 Where possible settings should ensure their main telephone line remains open, and not switched to answer machine, during this process. Use an alternative line for enquiries, to allow parents / carers to make contact.
- 5.6 On some occasions another parent may offer to take a child home with them. Schools / settings should not release a child into the care of another adult without the consent of the child's parent(s) / carer(s). Neither should members of staff take children home with them.
- 5.7 If, **after one hour** it has not been possible to contact a responsible adult, the following procedures apply.
- 6 All school pupils where after school child care provision is available:**
- 6.1 *Where a child is subject to a Child Protection plan, their allocated Social Worker, or duty Social Worker, should be contacted immediately.*
- 6.2 Send the pupil to after school club/extended school/childcare provision care and continue to try to contact parent or carer. Parents or carers should expect to pay a charge to use this facility.
- 6.3 If contact has not been made **30 minutes** prior to the after school club/childcare facilities official closing time, contact Sutton Police Station. The Police will assist in locating the parents / carers.
- 6.4 The setting and the Police will agree who the most appropriate person is to visit the home address, and who will contact Social Services to give them an early alert of the situation.
- 7 Children at all other settings, or a school with no after-school provision available:**
- 7.1 *Where a child is subject to a Child Protection plan, their allocated Social Worker, or duty Social Worker, should be contacted immediately.*
- 7.2 If after **1 hour** if it has not been possible to contact a parent /carer/emergency contact, contact Sutton Police Station. The setting and the Police will agree who the most appropriate person is to visit the home address, and who will contact Social Services to give them an early alert of the situation.
- 7.3 The school / provision should not be closed whilst staff are waiting for someone to arrive to collect the child. The child should remain until collected by the

nominated person, supervised by the most appropriate adult familiar to the child.

7.4 School and setting staff should be advised not to transport children alone in their own cars.

8 Information Sharing

8.1 Should the school / setting need to contact the Police they will need to pass on the following information to ensure an appropriate and timely response:

- Brief circumstances of incident
- Child's details (*these are usually summarised on their admission form*)
 - Name(s)
 - date of birth
 - address
 - gender
 - ethnicity
 - religion
 - language spoken
 - special dietary needs
 - SEN/behavioural difficulties/medical needs
- Parent/carer/alternative carer details
 - name(s), and Dates of Birth if known.
 - address(es)
 - home/work/mobile telephone number(s)
- Any current child protection concerns, along with contact details for allocated Social Worker
- Any previous Child Protection Concerns
- Any known family circumstances that may cause concern, eg any health, mental health, or family stress issue
- Any previous incidents of not being collected from school

9 Actions of the Police

9.1 The police will make enquiries regarding tracing the parents / carers, and, where considered appropriate, given any causes for concern regarding family background, will visit the family home, as agreed with the setting.

9.2 If the parents / cannot be located, the police will advise the setting whether they will instigate Police Protection, and if so, will notify Social Services.

10 Actions of Social Services

10.1 If Police Protection is instigated, Social Services, will, on request, identify a placement able to look after the child on an emergency basis when s/he has not been collected from school / other provision. The child will be placed with that carer on a temporary basis as soon as possible, until it can be assessed that the child can return home safely.

10.2 If a child is to be removed from school / setting premises in these circumstances, then arrangements should be made for a note to be left at the school, for the attention of the parent/carer should they subsequently arrive, asking them to contact the Social Services Department.

11 Children and Young People Transported to School or Setting by the Local Authority

- 11.1** Where arrangements are in place with the LA for a child to be transported or escorted home from school, and there is no response at the home address, nor the alternative emergency address given on the transport agreement, the driver will immediately inform the school / setting, and Sutton Family Centre. If other children have to be taken home, the child will remain in the vehicle whilst this is done, and return to the child's home at the end of the journey.
- 11.2** Meanwhile, school will contact the emergency numbers for the child, and undertake the procedures outlined above.
- 11.3** If there is still no one at home the driver will leave a pro-forma (see Appendix B) at the child's address with details of Sutton Family Centre, and unless directed otherwise, the driver will then take the child to the Family Centre. In the meantime, the school / setting will undertake the procedures outlined above.
- 11.4** The driver will hand over the pupil details to the staff at the Family Centre.
- 11.5** In agreement with the school / setting, the Family Centre will continue to follow the procedures, and in particular from **7.2**
- 11.6** The child will remain at the centre until either the parent or other nominated person is located. Sutton Family Centre staff will continue the procedures set out above to locate the parents / carers.
- 11.7** If the child has any medical need then it is expected that the escort will stay with them at the Family Centre, as they should be aware of and trained in the child's individual needs.

12 Major Incidents

- 12.1** If an incident occurs which results in a large number of children not being collected, social care will be contacted at the earliest opportunity, because it may be necessary to accommodate the children at a single location until an appropriate carer is located. If the nature of the incident is considered serious, the arrangements for collecting and caring for the children, including overnight placements, will form part of the Local Authority's emergency plan.

13 Action to follow up an incident of a child not being collected

- 13.1** On the first occasion when a child has not been collected, the school should consider the most appropriate response to ensure the incident is not repeated. The level of action will depend on the context of the situation.
- 13.2** For parents or carers who repeatedly fail to collect their child on time from the schools, settings or after school childcare facility, meetings with the parent/carer should be set up to address this, involving other support agencies where appropriate, and a CAF completed.

APPENDIX A

NB: ensure the Children's Emergency Duty Team are aware before leaving this message

Dear (Parent/Carer's name)

Re: Child(ren)'s name(s)

On Child(ren)'s name(s)

were not collected from school / provision at the end of the school day / session, and we were unable to contact you or your named emergency contacts. As a result, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of your child(ren), we implemented the procedure for dealing with children not collected at the end of the school day or activity.

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

You can also contact social care on 020 8770 5000 for further information about the action taken.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher / named member of staff.....Contact Number:.....

APPENDIX B

Dear Parent/Carer

On / / at pm, there was no response when your child(ren) was/were returned to his/her/their address as arranged. Unless the school / setting instructs otherwise, the driver will take your child to Sutton Family Centre, and arrangements will be made to ensure his/her safety.

Please ring the me at the school, and / the Family Centre on as soon as possible. If no-one is available when you call, please contact the Children's Emergency Duty Team on 020 8770 5000

Yours faithfully

.....
Head Teacher / Setting Manager

CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS AND CONTACT NUMBERS

- Is it 15 minutes after the end of school or provision?**
- If there is provision or activity available to occupy the child, suggest they join in while they wait.**
- If there is no provision available, ensure the child is supervised by an adult they are familiar with.**
- Ensure the main telephone line is kept open and not turned to answer machine.**
- From another line begin to call the contact numbers available.**
- Ensure staff are aware of relevant pupil information, and the details of those permitted to collect the child (and those not permitted).**
- Has one hour passed with no contact with parents / carers?**
- Contact for Sutton Police 0300 123 1212**
- Pass on pupil details:**
 - Brief circumstances of current situation**
 - Name, Date of Birth, address**
 - Any educational, medical, dietary, language or faith needs**
 - Parent / carer / alternative carer contact details**
 - Any current child protection concerns, along with contact details for allocated Social Worker**
 - Any previous Child Protection Concerns**
 - Any previous history of not being collected from provision**
- Await information from, and possible collection by Police team**
- After the situation has been resolved, consider meeting with the parent to prevent re-occurrence, and to complete a CAF where appropriate.**