

## **Late Collection Policy**

### **Statement of Intent**

Playhouse Pre-School understands that there may be occasions when a parent/carers is unexpectedly delayed and is unable to collect their child at the agreed collection time.

The safety and welfare of children is our priority.

Parents/carers are expected to collect their child promptly at the end of their booked session. Where a parent/carers knows that they will be late, they should contact Playhouse Pre-School as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Playhouse Pre-School will respond to late collection situations calmly and sensitively, while ensuring that children continue to receive appropriate supervision and care.

This policy applies to all children attending Playhouse Pre-School, including children aged 9 months to 2 years in the Caterpillar Room and children aged 2 to 4 years in the Butterfly Room.

This policy should be read alongside the Non-Collection of Children Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, Fees Policy, Attendance Policy and Lone Working Policy.

### **Collection Times**

Parents/carers will be informed of their child's agreed session times when they register.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is collected by an authorised person by the agreed end time of their child's session.

The setting will provide parents/carers with clear information about:

- the child's booked session times;
- the setting's contact telephone number;
- arrangements for notifying the setting of a delay; and
- the setting's arrangements for late collection.

Where session times change for a particular event or activity, parents/carers will be informed in advance.

### **Contacting Playhouse Pre-School**

Parents/carers who know they are going to be late should telephone Playhouse Pre-School as soon as possible.

The setting's contact details are provided to parents/carers through appropriate communication channels, including the parent information provided when a child starts.

Parents/carers should not rely solely on sending a message through another parent or child.

When contacting the setting, parents/carers should provide:

- their name;
- the child's name;

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- the expected collection time;
- the reason for the delay, where appropriate; and
- details of an alternative authorised person if someone else will collect the child.

### **If a Parent/Carer Is Delayed**

If a parent/carers contacts Playhouse to explain that they are delayed, staff will:

- reassure the parent/carers that the child will remain safely supervised;
- establish the expected collection time;
- confirm who will collect the child;
- ensure that the person collecting the child is authorised; and
- record the late collection where appropriate.

The child's welfare will remain the priority.

Staff will not make the child feel responsible for the delay.

### **If a Child Is Not Collected at the Agreed Time**

If a child has not been collected at the end of their session and the setting has not received any communication from the parent/carers, staff will attempt to contact the parent/carers.

There is no requirement to wait a fixed number of minutes before making contact.

The setting will make reasonable attempts to establish:

- whether the parent/carers is on their way;
- whether there has been an emergency;
- whether an authorised person can collect the child; and
- when the child is expected to be collected.

The child will remain safely supervised.

### **Emergency Contacts**

If the parent/carers cannot be contacted, the setting may contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's records.

Where appropriate, the setting will also contact another authorised person who has been nominated to collect the child.

Staff will only share information that is necessary for the purpose of arranging the child's safe collection.

### **Safeguarding and Non-Collection**

Most late collections will be resolved through communication with the parent/carers.

However, a late collection may become a safeguarding concern where:

- the parent/carers cannot be contacted;
- emergency contacts cannot be contacted;
- there is no authorised person available to collect the child;
- the child appears distressed or at risk;

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- there is a repeated pattern of unexplained late collection;
- the circumstances suggest that the child may have been abandoned;
- there are concerns about the parent's/carer's ability to safely care for the child; or
- staff have any other concern about the child's welfare.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, the Non-Collection of Children Policy and Safeguarding Children Policy will be followed.

If the child remains uncollected and the setting cannot establish a safe collection arrangement, the Manager or person in charge will seek appropriate advice from children's social care and/or the police.

Where there is an immediate risk to the child, the police will be contacted using 999. Staff must not take the child home with them or attempt to locate the parent/carer themselves.

### **Late Collection Charges**

Playhouse Pre-School recognises that occasional delays can occur because of genuine emergencies.

Where a parent/carer is late collecting their child, Playhouse Pre-School may charge a late collection fee in accordance with the setting's current Fees Policy and the terms and conditions agreed with parents/carers.

The current late collection charge is:

£5.00 for each 15 minutes, or part of 15 minutes, that the child remains at the setting after their agreed collection time.

For example:

#### **Length of delay    Late collection charge**

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| Up to 15 minutes | £5.00  |
| 16–30 minutes    | £10.00 |
| 31–45 minutes    | £15.00 |
| 46–60 minutes    | £20.00 |

The charge is based on the actual length of the delay and applies whether or not the parent/carer has contacted the setting.

Where a parent/carer has experienced a genuine emergency, the Manager may use discretion regarding the application of a late collection charge.

Any decision to waive or reduce a charge will be made by the Manager.

### **Purpose of the Late Collection Charge**

The late collection charge reflects the additional staffing and operational arrangements required when a child remains at the setting beyond their booked session.

The charge is not a substitute for the setting's safeguarding procedures.

A late collection charge will never prevent staff from:

- contacting parents/carers;
- contacting emergency contacts;
- seeking safeguarding advice;
- contacting children's social care; or
- contacting the police where necessary.

### **Repeated Late Collection**

Where a child is repeatedly collected late, the Manager may arrange a meeting with the parent/carer.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- discuss the reasons for repeated late collection;
- identify whether additional support is required;
- remind the parent/carer of the setting's collection arrangements;
- agree practical arrangements to reduce future delays; and
- consider whether there are any safeguarding concerns.

Repeated late collection may also be managed in accordance with the setting's Fees and Attendance procedures.

### **Staff Arrangements**

The Manager or person in charge will ensure that the child remains appropriately supervised while waiting to be collected.

Staff must not leave other children unsupervised in order to deal with a late collection.

Where a staff member is required to remain at the setting beyond their normal working hours, the Manager will ensure that appropriate staffing and safeguarding arrangements are maintained.

Where a situation continues beyond normal opening hours, the Non-Collection of Children Policy will be followed.

### **Care of the Child**

While waiting for collection, staff will ensure that the child:

- remains appropriately supervised;
- is reassured and made to feel safe;
- has access to appropriate activities;
- has their individual care needs met;
- receives food or drink where appropriate;
- receives appropriate toileting and personal care; and
- is supported according to their age and stage of development.

The child will not be made to feel that they have done anything wrong.

### **Recording Late Collections**

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Late collections will be recorded in accordance with the setting's normal record-keeping procedures.

Where a late collection is significant, repeated or gives rise to a concern, the record should include:

- child's name;
- date;
- agreed collection time;
- actual collection time;
- length of delay;
- name of person who collected the child;
- attempts made to contact the parent/carer;
- any emergency contacts contacted;
- any relevant explanation provided;
- any safeguarding concerns; and
- any action taken.

Records will be factual, objective and confidential.

### **Confidentiality**

Information concerning late collection will be treated confidentially.

Staff must not discuss a family's late collection with other parents/carers, friends, family members or members of the public.

Information will only be shared where there is a legitimate professional, safeguarding or legal reason.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.

Adapted on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026 by Z. Munford