



Non-Collection of Children Policy

Playhouse Pre-school

Statement of Intent

Playhouse Pre-School recognises that there may be occasions when a parent/carer or authorised person is unexpectedly unable to collect a child at the agreed collection time.

The safety and welfare of the child remains our priority.

Playhouse Pre-School will ensure that a child who has not been collected is cared for safely by suitable staff who are known to the child, while every reasonable effort is made to contact the parent/carer or an authorised emergency contact.

Staff will respond calmly and sensitively so that the child experiences as little distress as possible.

Parents/carers will be informed of the setting's collection procedures when their child starts at Playhouse and are expected to provide accurate and up-to-date contact information.

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.

Authorised Collection Arrangements

Parents/carers must provide Playhouse Pre-School with accurate information about who is authorised to collect their child.

The registration information should include:

- the names and contact details of parents/carers;
- at least two emergency contacts where possible;
- the names of other adults authorised to collect the child; and
- any arrangements or restrictions relating to collection.

Parents/carers must inform Playhouse as soon as possible if their normal collection arrangements change.

Where another person is collecting the child, the parent/carer should provide the setting with their name and, where appropriate, other identifying information.

Playhouse may use an agreed password or another appropriate method to verify the identity of an unfamiliar authorised collector.

A child will not be released to an adult who is not authorised to collect them unless the setting has received appropriate confirmation from the parent/carer or there is another lawful and documented arrangement in place.

Changes to Collection Arrangements

Parents/carers should contact Playhouse Pre-School as soon as they know that they will be unable to collect their child at the agreed time.

Parents/carers should provide:

- their name;

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- the child's name;
- the expected delay;
- the name of the person collecting the child, where applicable; and
- any other information necessary to ensure the child's safe collection.

If the person collecting the child is not known to staff, appropriate identification may be requested.

Parents/carers should not rely solely on sending a message through another parent or child to notify Playhouse of a change to collection arrangements.

Procedure When a Child Is Not Collected

1. At the Expected Collection Time

At the end of the child's session, staff will establish whether the child has been collected.

If the parent/carer or authorised collector is delayed, staff will continue to supervise and care for the child appropriately.

The child will not be left waiting unsupervised.

2. Contact the Parent/Carer

If a child has not been collected and Playhouse has not received an explanation, staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer using the contact details held by the setting.

Staff will make reasonable attempts to establish:

- whether the parent/carer is on their way;
- whether there has been an emergency;
- whether an authorised person can collect the child; and
- how long the delay is expected to be.

The child will remain safely supervised while contact is attempted.

3. Contact Emergency Contacts

If the parent/carer cannot be contacted, staff will contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's records.

The setting will make reasonable attempts to contact all appropriate emergency contacts.

Staff will not disclose unnecessary personal information about the family when making these calls.

4. Authorised Collectors

If an authorised person is able to collect the child, the setting will verify their identity before releasing the child.

The child will only be released where the person is authorised by the parent/carer or there is another appropriate legal or safeguarding basis for the collection.

If the Child Remains Uncollected

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If the child remains at Playhouse after the expected collection time, the Manager or person in charge will assess the circumstances and continue attempts to contact the parent/carer and emergency contacts.

Safeguarding Concerns

A failure to collect a child may be a safeguarding concern, particularly where:

- the parent/carer cannot be contacted;
- emergency contacts cannot be contacted;
- there is a pattern of unexplained late collection;
- the circumstances suggest that the child may have been abandoned;
- the parent/carer appears unable to provide appropriate care;
- staff have concerns about the child's welfare;
- there are concerns about domestic abuse, neglect, substance misuse or other risks;
- the parent/carer arrives under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- the person attempting to collect the child is not authorised; or
- there are concerns about the safety of returning the child to the person collecting them.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed and the Safeguarding Children Policy followed.

The DSL for Playhouse Pre-School is **Claire Bransby**.
Deputy DSLs are **Siouxsie Holloway and Zoe Munford**.

Staff must not attempt to investigate a safeguarding concern themselves.

Contacting Children's Services or the Police

If the child remains uncollected and:

- the parent/carer and emergency contacts cannot be reached;
- no authorised person is available to collect the child;
- the setting has concerns that the child may have been abandoned; or
- the setting believes that the child may be at risk,

the Manager or person in charge will seek advice from the appropriate safeguarding agency and/or police.

Where there is an immediate risk to the child's safety, 999 will be contacted.

Where immediate police attendance is not required, the appropriate non-emergency or children's social care route will be used.

The setting will follow the advice given by Children's Schools and Family or the police regarding arrangements for the child.

Staff will not attempt to locate the parent/carer themselves.

Staff must not take the child home with them or arrange private childcare for the child.

Care of the Child

While the child remains at Playhouse, they will be cared for by appropriate staff.

The setting will make reasonable arrangements to ensure that:

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- the child remains supervised;
- the child is comfortable and reassured;
- their usual care needs are met;
- food and drink are provided where appropriate;
- toileting and personal care needs are attended to;
- younger children receive age-appropriate care;
- the child is supported emotionally; and
- the child is kept separate from unnecessary adult discussions about the situation.

Where possible, a member of staff who knows the child well, such as their Key Person, will remain involved in their care.

The child will not be made to feel responsible for the situation.

Staff should use age-appropriate language and avoid discussing adult concerns in front of the child.

Staffing and Supervision

The Manager or person in charge will ensure that the child remains appropriately supervised while the situation is resolved.

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

Where a staff member is required to remain beyond their normal working hours, the Manager will make appropriate staffing arrangements.

If the setting is required to remain open beyond its normal closing time, the Manager will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and supervision arrangements remain in place.

Collection by Police or Children's Social Care

If the police or children's social care become involved, the setting will follow their instructions.

The setting will record:

- the name and role of the person collecting the child;
- the organisation they represent;
- the time the child leaves the setting; and
- any relevant instructions provided.

Where appropriate, identification will be checked.

The child's records will be made available only where there is an appropriate legal or safeguarding basis for doing so.

Collection by a Parent/Carer After a Delay

When the parent/carers or authorised person arrives, staff will remain professional and calm.

The child will be reassured and supported.

Where appropriate, the Manager will speak privately with the parent/carers about:

- the reason for the late collection;

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- the importance of contacting the setting as soon as possible;
- future collection arrangements; and
- any concerns arising from the incident.

Repeated late collections may result in a meeting with the Manager and may be addressed under the setting's Fees and Attendance procedures.

Where a parent/carer arrives and staff have concerns about their ability to safely collect the child, the Safeguarding Children Policy will be followed.

Recording the Incident

All significant non-collection incidents will be recorded.

The record should include:

- the child's name;
- date;
- child's scheduled collection time;
- actual collection time;
- names of staff present;
- name of the expected collector;
- attempts made to contact the parent/carer;
- attempts made to contact emergency contacts;
- names of people contacted;
- advice received;
- any safeguarding concerns;
- whether children's social care or police were contacted;
- who eventually collected the child;
- the time the child left the setting; and
- any action required following the incident.

Records will be factual, objective and confidential.

A copy or appropriate record will be retained in accordance with Playhouse Pre-School's Data Protection and Record Keeping procedures.

Repeated Non-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:

- understand the reasons for repeated late collection;
- identify whether additional support is required;
- agree appropriate arrangements;
- remind the parent/carer of the setting's collection expectations; and
- consider whether there are any safeguarding concerns.

Where repeated late collection indicates that a child may be experiencing neglect or another safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding Children Policy will be followed.

Charges for Late Collection

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Playhouse Pre-School may charge for additional staff time resulting from late collection where this is permitted under the setting's current Fees Policy and the terms agreed with parents/carers.

Any applicable charges will be communicated clearly to parents/carers.

A charge will never prevent the setting from taking appropriate safeguarding action or contacting emergency services or children's social care where necessary.

Ofsted Notifications

A non-collection incident does not automatically require notification to Ofsted.

The Manager will consider whether the circumstances amount to a significant event or otherwise meet Ofsted's notification requirements.

Where a notification is required, it will be made as soon as reasonably possible and within the applicable statutory timeframe.

Ofsted's current guidance requires significant events affecting childcare to be reported as soon as possible and within 14 days.

Confidentiality

Information about a non-collection incident will be treated confidentially.

Staff must not discuss the circumstances 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.

The setting will cooperate fully with children's social care, the police, Ofsted or other relevant agencies where required.

Supporting the Child

Playhouse recognises that being left at the setting after other children have gone home may be upsetting for a child.

Staff will:

- reassure the child;
- provide familiar activities;
- maintain appropriate routines;
- ensure their physical needs are met;
- provide age-appropriate emotional support; and
- avoid making the child feel that they have done something wrong.

Younger children will be given particular consideration because they may have limited understanding of why their parent/carer has not arrived and may require additional reassurance and familiar care.

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

Adopted on 24th April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 29th September 2026 by Z. Munford