



# Drop Off and Collection Policy

**Ratified:** September 2024  
**Chair of Governors:** Marie Linnane  
**Review:** September 2027

## **Introduction**

This policy is designed to ensure that children are dropped off and collected safely from school in accordance with effective safeguarding practice.

The policy is intended to give clear guidance about school procedures for drop off and collection and where:

- children are collected late
- children are not collected
- it is not safe for children to go home unaccompanied
- there are concerns about supervision before and after school
- there are concerns about a parent/carer's ability to offer safe care, because they are under the influence of alcohol/drugs or there are concerns about their mental health state

## **Admissions information**

When a child starts at our school, parents/carers are given information on the school day and routines, as well as expectations around punctuality of drop off and collection of children. It is made clear that school staff are responsible for the children during school opening hours, but they have other commitments once their teaching day has finished.

Parents/carers are made aware of any other relevant policies/guidance in place, which are updated as and when necessary.

For Drop Off and Collection Procedures – please see Appendix 1

## **Supervision before and after school**

If parents choose to let their child travel to/from school independently, then they should assess the risks associated with the school route and their own child's confidence. Parents should work with their children to build up their independence, while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. The most important factor to consider about suitability of a child walking to/from school alone is any risk to the child.

Schools can support parents in decision making and consideration of risk about children being home alone and school transport arrangements by using the checklist for supervision of children before/after school (below).

If the school is in agreement for a child in Year 5 and 6 to make their own way home, the parent will need to sign our school waiver; ensuring that this is reviewed regularly. As in the earlier sections, this waiver makes clear to parents/carers that the responsibility for their child/ren's safety rests with them.

## **Supervision on school site**

At Cuffley School, there is no supervision of children before 8:35am. Doors are opened for drop off at 8:35am and staff will supervise children until the official start of the school day at 8:45am. If children attend an early morning group or club, it is the responsibility of the leader of the group or club to advise parents about the drop off time and location and to supervise the children upon arrival.

Parents can reasonably be expected to understand that the school cannot make an open commitment regarding supervision.

### **Drop off and collection**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person if they are unable to do so themselves.

The school office needs to be made aware of who is permitted to collect your child/ren from school. You can amend or add family members, guardians or contacts on your child's Arbor profile. With regards to last minute collection changes on the day, please call or email the school office. We will not dismiss children to unknown adults. If the school are unsure, we will contact parents to seek parents' permission.

We do not permit any pupil at Cuffley school to collect siblings. Older siblings, 14 years or older, are permitted to collect Years 5 and 6 only, in agreement with the school and on a case-by-case basis.

### **Extra-curricular activities**

The same procedures for drop off and collection can be applied to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues.

If children are regularly collected late from extra-curricular activities, we will manage this on a case-by-case basis.

### **Checklist for supervision of children before/after school**

The following factors should be considered when children are left unsupervised at home; walking to/from school or in the care of a sibling:

- Has the parent/carer considered the risk/s posed by leaving their child alone, walking to/from school or in the care of a sibling?
- How old is/are the child/ren?
- How mature is/are the child/ren? What is their level of understanding/awareness about being unsupervised/walking to or from school?
- How comfortable is/are the child/ren with the arrangements (this includes the younger child and the older child who is acting as 'carer')?
- Where will the children be left? Is this a safe place?
- How long, and how often, will the child/ren be left?
- Is the home environment safe and secure? Has the parent/carer assessed the home environment/journey to or from school for risks? Has the older child or 'carer' been involved in this risk assessment?
- How far will the child/ren have to walk (if appropriate)?
- How far away will the parent/carer be? Will they be easily contactable?
- Do any of the children (this also includes the older sibling or 'carer') have additional needs – medical, emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties/disabilities? How will these needs be met in the parent/carer's absence?

- Does the child or sibling caring for another child know what to do in an emergency? Does the child know who they can contact in case of an emergency? Have instructions been left e.g. in case of a fire?
- What are the expectations of the child/ren during this time? Are they expected to cook for themselves etc.?
- Does the child have knowledge about how to keep themselves and younger siblings safe, e.g. road safety, not answering the door to strangers, cooking etc.?
- What is the level of knowledge when it comes to first aid?
- How well do the siblings get on? How will tension be managed in the absence of the parent/carer?
- Are the children clear about rules and boundaries of what they can and can't do while parents/carers are out? If they are looking after a younger sibling, do they have the confidence and authority to implement these rules consistently? What will they do if the younger children misbehave?
- Is the home environment safe and secure? Has the parent/carer assessed the home environment/journey to or from school for risks? Has the older child or 'carer' been involved in this risk assessment?

### **Factors that may compromise a parent/carer's ability to offer safe care**

The use of drugs/alcohol or the presence of mental health difficulties does not in itself necessarily mean that the parents/carers are uncaring, incompetent or unable to offer safe care to their child/ren. However, if the extent of a parent's own needs mean that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services is required.

'Drugs' in this context refers to all drugs including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. All schools should have a drug policy which sets out the school's role in relation to all drug matters; both the content and organisation of drug education and the management of drugs within school boundaries. In addition to this, all schools should have agreed a range of responses and procedures for managing drug incidents, understood by all members of school staff, and documented within the drug policy.

If an adult with parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care, steps must be taken to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child. They will consider:

- The safety of the children in the building
- If the parent appears to be safe to be able to offer safe care for their child/ren.

Staff will consider the following questions below:

- How is the adult presenting - are they staggering, speaking incoherently?
- Does the parent/carer's needs compromise the ability of parents to meet the children's basic physical and psychological needs? If so, how?
- How do they intend to get home /how did they arrive at school with the child? Is the parent driving? Are they fit to do so?
- Is the parent/carer in sole care of the child? Can the adult identify another parent or supportive adult to be with them and the child?

If a member of staff is concerned about a parent/carer's ability to care for the child based on the factors above, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services may be required.

The school should aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of Police and Children's Services, however, schools do not have the authority legally to retain a child against a parent/carer's will. Therefore, if this is not possible, then the school should consider ringing the police.

There may be occasions where an immediate, emergency call needs to be made to the because it is judged that a child or another person (including staff) may be imminently at risk of danger.

Examples include:

- where an intoxicated parent is behaving violently or is threatening violence such that the belief is that the threats may be carried out thus compromising the immediate safety or care of a child, or;
- place others in danger by driving a car whilst unfit through alcohol or drugs.

### **Late Collection**

Parents and carers share in the responsibility to work with staff to ensure their children are safe and in the care of a responsible adult. The school must be notified immediately it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child may be late. If school is not advised, the following procedures may be used:

- Checking for any information about changes to the normal collection routines
- Attempting to contact the parents/carers at home/work/mobile phone
- Attempting to telephone emergency contacts
- Keeping a record of incidents where parents/carers are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents
- Sending a letter home to the parent/carer notifying them of the possible arrangements that may be put into place for their child if they continue to collect their child late and inviting parents in for a discussion about their circumstances if applicable.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility, this must be noted on your child's Arbor profile. You can amend or add family members, guardians or contacts on your child's Arbor profile. With regards to last minute collection changes on the day, please call or email the school office. We will not dismiss children to unknown adults. If the school are unsure, we will contact parents to seek parents' permission. In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent/carer must give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home.

Concerns about the child's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

### **Non collection**

In the event that a child is not collected from the school by an authorised adult, and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty-five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures, i.e. police will be informed and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made.

The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken and calls made. Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them.

Once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain whether there is anything that the school could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation. It may be necessary to discuss with the parent steps that they could take to avoid recurrence e.g. ensuring that the school has current contact details etc. It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure that they worked smoothly and if necessary to amend for future incidents.

### **Regularly transported children**

Regularly transported children in this context refers to children who have a statutory entitlement of free home to school transport from the Local Authority. This includes:

- children who have been placed in a school that is not within the statutory walking distance (2 miles for pupils under 8, and 3 miles for those aged 8 plus)
- children who have been placed in a school where there is no safe walking route
- children from 'low income' (those who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents receive the maximum Working Tax Credit)
- families if they are aged 8-11 and live more than 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school
- children with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) who have an Education Health and Care Plan which has transport requirements written into it.

The responsibility of parent/carer is to ensure that their child is ready for collection at the designated time as notified by the Local Authority or operator and that there is a suitable person to receive their child at the end of the school day.

## Appendix 1

### **Drop Off and Collection Procedures**

There is no supervision for children before 8:35am and children should not be left unaccompanied on site.

At 8.35am classroom doors will be opened and a 'soft start' will operate until the doors close at 8:45am for registration. Late arrivals should enter the school through the front office.

For early morning groups or clubs, the leader of the group/club will advise parents regarding time and location of drop off. Staff will then take the children into their supervision.

At the end of the school day, at 3:15pm, children should be collected from staff at their classroom doors by parents/carers/designated person.

Parents/carers may need to collect more than one child. Ideally, parents should collect their youngest child first, then make their way to collect the older siblings. Children will be looked after by year group staff until parents/carers arrive. If parents are more than ten minutes late (3.25pm), any children not collected will be taken to the main entrance where late collection procedures will apply.

In preparation for secondary school, children from Years 5 and 6 may leave independently, upon parents signing a waiver and the school agreeing. These children who wish to meet their siblings and parents/carers, will need to make their way to an agreed meeting place. If staff have concerns about any child in relation to drop off and collection procedures, this privilege will be withdrawn, and parents will be advised.