Collection, Non-Collection and Missing Child Policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Spurcroft Primary School.

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Collection, Non-Collection and Missing Child Policy

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility' This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. General collection procedure

Parents will promptly collect pupils at the end of the school day, which is 3:15pm, from the playground.

Staff members supervise pupils in the classroom until all pupils have been collected.

Pupils will be allowed to travel home on their own as long as the Headteacher has been informed of this arrangement by the pupil's parents/ carers, prior to this commencing.

Staff members will not release a pupil if it is felt that the parents/carers are not in a fit state to ensure the pupil's safety or if the pupil shows signs of distress or anxiety. In these cases, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed and children's social care, and the police if appropriate, will be contacted.

Pupils will only be permitted to leave the premises with adults who are registered with the school as a person with collection responsibility. Under no circumstances will staff members take pupils home themselves, without the permission of the Headteacher.

3. Late collection procedure

Parents will notify the school at the first possible opportunity if they believe they will be late to collect their child. The school will allow for a 15-minute window for late arrival. If a pupil has not been collected 15 minutes after the specified collection time, a staff member will escort them to the school's after-school club (Wild Wood Club) before trying to contact the pupil's parents/carers. If the pupil's parents/carers cannot be reached via the contact details provided, emergency contacts will be contacted, and the school will continue to try and contact the parents/carers. If the parents/carers and emergency contacts cannot be contacted, the non-collection procedure will be followed as outlined in section 7.

The school will hold at least one emergency contact for each pupil and will have more than one where reasonably possible.

If pupils need to attend the after-school club due to parents/carers being late to collect their children, parents/carers will be charged in accordance with the normal Wild Wood Club charges which are described here: https://www.spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk/wild-wood-club/

All staff members, including those in charge of after-school activities, will be aware of the school's internal procedure for late collection and will ensure that the situation is resolved whilst causing as little distress as possible to the pupil.

While awaiting collection, pupils will be supervised at all times, ensuring appropriate staffing ratios are met. Where appropriate, a staff member will sensitively ask the pupil whether they are aware of any reason that could account for their parents/carers being late.

4. After-school club collection procedure

Parents will follow the normal collection procedure, as outlined above, when picking up children from afterschool clubs. Parents will be informed of where to collect pupils from, when they are informed of their child's place in a club.

Pupils who have not been collected following an after-school club will be escorted to the school's after-school club – Wild Wood Club.

If parents/carers are late to collect their children, which results in the pupils attending the after-school care club, parents/carers will be charged in accordance with the normal Wild Wood Club charges which are described here: https://www.spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk/wild-wood-club/

5. Recurrence of late collection

The length and frequency of late collections are monitored by the school. The school will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers are late with no reasonable explanation.

Concerns regarding a pupil's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In the event of recurrence of late collection, where no reasonable explanation has been given, a letter will be sent home to the parents/carers inviting them to a discussion about their circumstances and the impact of the late collection. The school would work with families to put a plan in place.

6. Collecting a child on someone's behalf

The school never releases a pupil into the care of another adult who is not a named emergency contact without the consent of their parents/carers.

Social workers are not permitted to collect pupils from the school to attend care review meetings without the prior consent of teachers, foster carers, parents/carers and the pupil themselves.

The school will not accept a list of people who may collect the pupil as a substitute to calling the school office and informing the school directly of the change in collection.

Pupils may be collected from school by an older sibling if the sibling is aged 16 or older.

If parents/carers wish for their child to be collected by another party who does not have parental responsibility, whether this is a regular occurrence or a single occurrence, they must notify the school in writing.

In an emergency, verbal consent may be given for an agreed person to take their child home. This will be recorded, and a letter will be sent to the parents/carers confirming that the arrangement was made at their request. Verbal consent must include a full physical description of the person, unless already known to the school.

A password may be requested to be used by both parties to ensure the identity of the person collecting the pupil is the individual arranged by the parent.

Staff members who are unsure of an adult's identity will ask to see identification. If there is uncertainty about a person's identity following the checking of their identification, the following procedure will be followed:

- A staff member will take the pupil to the school office.
- The pupil's parents/carers will be contacted for further advice.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be made aware of the situation.
- If the pupil's parents/carers are not contactable, the standard procedure for uncollected pupils will be followed.

Under no circumstances will a pupil be allowed to leave the school with someone if they are showing signs of distress or anxiety.

7. Non-collection procedure

The school will continue to try and contact the parents/carers and named emergency contacts in the event of a non-collection. A detailed record of the action taken, and the calls made, will be kept.

Under no circumstances will staff members go and look for the parents/carers. A staff member will supervise the pupil at all times.

If no contact has been made with the pupil's parents/carers or emergency contacts, and no one has arrived to collect the child within an hour since the original collection time – the end of the school day or at 4.30pm if it was prearranged for a pupil to attend a school club – the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed and children's social care, and the police if appropriate, will be contacted.

A member of staff will stay with the pupil until children's social care arrives.

Once the situation has been resolved, the reason the circumstances arose will be established and noted, and steps to avoid recurrence will be taken by the school and parents/carers.

8. Missing Child

The school endeavours to ensure that no child goes missing and that it has measures in place to minimise the likelihood of this happening by taking the necessary action, should the situation arise.

- The staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout the day and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times.
- When on excursions outside the school premises, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the children in accordance with the school's Health & Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy.
- Staff undertake regular roll calls and head counts.
  All doors and gates are closed during the school day or monitored appropriately when they are open with staff being vigilant regarding movement of children.

The school has rigorous procedures for pursuing unexplained absences, including the aim to contacting parents/carers by 9.30am if a child has not arrived in school and the reason for absence is not known. This should ensure that staff become aware at the earliest opportunity of any child who may have gone missing on the way to school. In these circumstances, this policy will be followed.

School policies relating to health and safety and welfare, if strictly adhered to, should prevent any of the above occurring. However, should a child become lost, the following action will be taken:

Lost at school

If a child cannot be found on the school premises staff should alert the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team immediately, who will make enquiries of relevant members of staff as to when the child was last seen and where, to eliminate any misunderstanding.

Staff must be vigilant in respect of the safety of the other children with regard to supervision and security.

Ensuring that the remaining children are sufficiently supervised and secure, a member of staff should be sent to search the school site, keeping a calm manner and maintaining contact via walkie-talkie.

If the child cannot be found within fifteen minutes then the parents/carers must be informed. Meanwhile the office will make available a photograph of the child (from the office database) and their description. Continue to search, opening up the area, keeping in touch via mobile phone/walkie-talkie.

The Headteacher will consider calling a fire drill to see if the pupil who is not accounted for arrives at the roll call point.

If the child cannot be found within thirty minutes then the Police must be informed.

Lost whilst off-site (including on sports fixtures)

If a child is lost on an outing, the member of staff noticing the child missing should alert other members of the party and carry out a roll call/head count.

1. A member of staff (or the whole group if appropriate) should retrace their movements to the last place that the child was seen without compromising the safety and welfare of the other children.
2. Another member of staff should alert the management/security services of the organisation being visited and the School office to let them know the situation.
3. Children on the visit should be asked for any relevant information if appropriate.
4. If the child is not found after fifteen minutes the police will be called and the School will alert the parents/carers.
5. Staff will co-operate with the police and take any action as directed by them.

Pupil removed from school premises by unapproved adult

No child is allowed to leave the school site with an adult other than a parent without permission being received from a parent either by telephone or email no later than half an hour before pick up. *This rule must be rigorously enforced*. In cases where a parent is legally denied access to their child, all staff must be informed in writing of the circumstances together with a photo of the child and, if possible, the parent. This information must be kept confidential and the photo displayed inconspicuously within the classroom (eg inside a cupboard door that is not accessible by children). The list of relevant staff must be reviewed regularly and written information and photos shredded when it is no longer relevant. If a child is seen (or believed) to be taken from the school site by an unapproved adult, the police and parents/carers will be immediately informed.

Measures in place to ensure a child does not go missing include:

- Information to staff about challenging unknown persons on the premises and urgently informing the senior leadership team
- Requirement for all visitors to register on arrival with the office, present evidence of identity on their first visit, obtain a visitor's badge and be provided with information regarding safeguarding and the relevant officers
- Boundary security regularly checked by health and safety and maintenance teams.
- Adequate and rigorous supervision of children at all times
- Sufficient staff to maintain ratios appropriate to the venue and the nature of the activity being undertaken
- Rigorous risk assessments for trips undertaken within the allocated time scale which have been reviewed by the Education Visits Co-ordinator

Following up an incident

When the situation has been resolved the Headteacher and SLT will review the reasons for it happening. This will include:

- Reviewing the incident with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Assessing the effectiveness of risk assessment procedures.
- Taking written statements from and interviewing staff involved.

- Collecting information from any other relevant adult witnesses, including officials from the venue where a child has gone missing off-site.
- Discussion, as appropriate, with pupils.
- Discussion with the parent/s of the child regarding the situation and relevant information as appropriate
- If the incident requires reporting to Ofsted, in respect of RIDDOR or any other official body, such action will be taken by the school.
- The incident and effectiveness of subsequent action taken will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Link Governor. Lost children and late collection statistics are reported to the H&S Governor and through the Headteacher's report to Governors
- SLT will issue advice to staff and pupils and implement any necessary measures to ensure that it does not happen again.

9. Monitoring and review

Following an event of non-collection, the relevant procedures will be reviewed to ensure they were effective and amended where necessary. This policy will be reviewed every two years.