

# Factsheet for schools

## Safeguarding before and after school (dropping off and picking up)

**October 2017**

*This factsheet is aimed primarily at primary schools, but some of the information may be useful for secondary schools.*

As part of schools' wider safeguarding responsibilities they should have policies and procedures in place around the dropping off and collection of children to and from the school site. These policies should be shared with parents/carers when a child joins the school. Parents/carers should read and sign a copy of this.

On enrolment to the school, parents/carers should provide the following information:

- the names and full addresses of parents/carers (including confirmation of parental responsibility/ private fostering arrangements and any relevant paperwork)
- home, work and mobile phone numbers
- email addresses where appropriate
- two emergency/ authorised adult contacts who may be called in the event of the parents/carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency
- information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child (with copies of any relevant legal documents)

The school should use a secure system to store this information and update it on an annual basis.

The drop-off/pick-up policy should cover:

- **Children walking to/from school alone**

There is no law on what age children may travel to school unsupervised. Parents should make their decision based on their child's maturity, ability and the safety and distance of the route to school.

Many schools advise parents with children under the age of 8 to make sure they are accompanied by an adult or an older sibling. The Department for

Education provides some guidance [Home-to-school travel and transport statutory guidance for local authorities \(PDF\)](#)

- **Older siblings accompanying a child to/from school on a parent's behalf**

There is no law determining the age at which a sibling can accompany a child to school.

Many schools prefer not to send a child home with a sibling unless the sibling is aged 14 years or older. It is ultimately up to the parents to make the judgement of whether they feel this is appropriate. Factors that parents should take into account include; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected, the length and nature of the journey home and the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected.

- **If parents/carers are late to collect their child**

Every school should have a procedure for late collection, which all staff and parents/carers should be made fully aware of. This should include that in the event of lateness for collection the school will attempt to:

- contact the parent/carers on the telephone numbers or email addresses they have provided
- call emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached, so an authorised adult can come and collect the child
- keep records of late collections
- in the event of frequent late collections, send home a letter to parents advising that frequent late collections may result in the school contacting children's social care if they are concerned about the welfare of a child.

If the parent/carers or authorised people cannot collect the child and someone else will be coming instead, the parents need to notify the school as soon as possible and identification may be required.

Some schools use a password system for collection of a child.

- **If parents/carers fail to collect their child**

The policy should outline that the school will make every effort to contact the parents/ carers and authorised person whose details have been supplied. They may wish to stipulate a cut-off time after which they will apply child protection procedures and contact children's social care.

While the child remains uncollected they should stay at school in the care of two fully vetted members of staff (one should preferably be the designated safeguarding lead or deputy). Staff should not take the child home with them, transport them home or go in search of parents/carers.

A full written report of the incident should be recorded.

- **What will happen if parents/carers appear unable to offer safe care of their child?**

There may be times when the school is worried that the adult collecting a child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or their behaviour otherwise suggests that they may not be in a fit state to safely look after their child. In this case, the school may decide to:

- contact another family member to collect the child
- record the incident as a potential safeguarding concern. Repeated instances of an adult appearing unfit to provide safe care should be discussed with children's social care to seek advice on whether or not a referral needs to be made.

Schools do not have the legal authority to keep a child on the premises against a parent/carer's will. If the school has immediate concerns about a child's welfare and the parent/carer insists on taking the child, then the school should contact the police. In such cases the schools should also make a safeguarding referral to children's social care. A full written report of the incident should be recorded.

- **If someone else turns up to collect the child**

Schools should not release children to any other person without first speaking to the authorised parents/carers. If a parent/relative turns up, who does not have legal custody of the child, then the school should contact the child's legal guardian.

- **If a child says they do not want to go home**

If a child discloses that they do not want to go home because of abuse or neglect, then the school should follow their child protection procedures.

- **After school activities**

The same procedures for dropping off and collecting pupils should apply to after school clubs on the school premises.

## Online training for schools

- [Managing sexualised behaviour in primary schools](#)
- [Child protection in schools](#)
- [Safer recruitment in education](#)
- [Keeping children safe online](#)

**Contact the NSPCC's Knowledge and Information Service with any questions about child protection or related topics:**

**Tel: 0808 800 5000 | Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) | Twitter: [@NSPCCpro](https://twitter.com/NSPCCpro)**

**Copyright © 2017 NSPCC Knowledge and Information Services - All rights reserved.**