

A joint Policy Agreement for procedures to be followed should any pupil not be collected from a school, setting or after school childcare provision at the usual times. This policy has been agreed between Merton Council's Children, Lifelong Learning and Families Department, Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Metropolitan Police. (Revised April 2024 and approved by MSCP Executive Group)

Prevention

Schools, settings and childcare providers act in Loco Parentis and should ensure that parents and carers have the establishment's telephone number and that they are familiar with the expectations regarding providing contact details and collecting their child from the school/after school childcare facility/nursery.

Schools, settings and childcare providers should ensure that they obtain up to date telephone numbers and addresses for each pupil. Parents and carers should be reminded frequently in letters home, newsletters and information boards to update contact details and provide as many emergency contacts as possible. If a telephone number does not work or a letter is returned "with not known at the address/doesn't live here" the school should follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the parent/carer.

Action if a child is not collected

If the parent/carer has failed to contact the establishment to explain that they are going to be late, an adult should telephone all the contact numbers (including emergency numbers) available for that pupil and make every effort to make contact a responsible adult to ensure the pupil is collected. This could include making a visit to the home address if within a reasonable travelling distance and this would be considerable to be a reasonable step to have taken prior to making a referral. If it is not possible to contact a responsible adult, the following procedures apply. *Please note that there will be very few occasions when this procedure is needed.*

Nursery aged pupil 2- 4 years attending part time –Allow 30 minutes after the official end time of the nursery session to make contact with parents/carers/emergency contacts or for the parent/carer to contact you. After 30 minutes if it has not been possible to contact the parent/carer/emergency contact, following alerting police on 101 call the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020-8545-4227 for consultation if the child is a Merton resident or the children's social care department for their home Local Authority.

All pupils – where no after school childcare provision exists or is full –If contact has not been made 30 minutes after the end of the school day, following alerting police on 101 call the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020-8545-4227 for consultation if the child is a Merton resident or the children's social care department for their home Local Authority. A referral to Social Care should be completed no later than 4:15 pm. This is to give the Children and Families Hub some time to explore potential placement options with the fostering team.

All pupils - where after school childcare provision is available - Send pupil to after school club/extended school/childcare provision care and continue to try to contact parent/carer/emergency contact. Parents or carers should expect to pay a charge to use this facility. If contact has not been made 30 minutes after the end of the school day, following alerting police on 101 call the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020-8545-4227 for consultation if the child is a Merton resident or the children's social care department for their home Local Authority. A referral to Children Services should be

completed no later than 4:15 pm. This is to give the Children and Families Hub some time to explore potential placement options with the fostering team.

All pupils - who usually attend after school childcare provision - Allow 30 minutes after the official closing time of the provision to make contact with parents/carers/emergency contacts or for the parent/carer to contact you. After 30 minutes following alerting police on 101 and if the child is a Merton resident call the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020-8545-4227 and you will be directed to the out of hours team. If the child is not a Merton resident you should contact the children's social care department for their home Local Authority.

Pupils with special educational needs for whom transport is provided from the school to the child's home by the authority – Where there is no parent/carer at home to receive a child being brought home from school or where the parent/carer is not at the designated drop off point the driver/escort should try to make contact with parents/carer/emergency contacts immediately and with LBM's or the home boroughs transport team and follow their transport policy procedures.

Discretion should be used with the above procedures in exceptional circumstances such as major/local disasters or unexpected early closures.

Social Care are the lead agency and the Police will assist with enquiries for children not collected from school or where there is no one at home to receive them.

NB the below guidance is for a child that is a Merton resident, please contact the children's social care departments of their respective home Local Authority if they are not a Merton resident.

Action to follow up an incident of a child not being collected

On the first occasion when a child has not been collected, the school should consider the most appropriate response to ensure the incident is not repeated. The level of action will depend on the context of the situation. The Children and Families Hub can provide advice and guidance and may be contacted on **020-8545-4226** or **020-8545-4227**.

For parents or carers who repeatedly fail to collect their child on time from the schools, settings or after school childcare facility, meetings with the parent/carer should be set up to address this. Consideration should be given to completing a TAC or TAF.

If this fails to improve the situation the Children and Families Hub can be contacted on **020-8545-4226** or **020-8545-4227**. They can give advice and guidance to schools, settings and childcare providers about any concerns in this area and can advise when a referral to their service may be appropriate.

If the school have wider safeguarding concerns of which collecting the child late or failing to collect the child is part of these concerns please refer to the multi-agency additional needs descriptors [Effective Support for Families in Merton - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://www.mertonscp.org.uk) to help you to determine levels of need which may indicate if a request for a service should be made to the Children and Families Hub. A request for a service can be made by completing [Children and Families Hub Request for Service Form - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://www.mertonscp.org.uk) This should be sent to candfhub@merton.gov.uk. Further information can be found on the internet.

DRAFT MODEL LETTER TO PARENTS / CARERS

If you have recently changed your mobile phone, moved house or changed your number for any reason, please ensure that you inform your child's school or childcare provider. Not being able to contact a child's parents or carers in the case of an injury or emergency can delay any medical treatment that may be needed, cause concern to the school staff and, most importantly, cause the child to be more distressed than necessary.

Please ensure that the school or provider has your current telephone number(s) and also the number of another relative, trusted friend, neighbour etc.

If you are going to be late collecting your child from school for any reason, please make sure that you contact the school and let them know. The staff can then reassure your child that you are on your way and again prevent them from becoming distressed.

If we are unable to contact you in an emergency or in the event that your child is late being collected from school, we may need to contact the Police and make a referral to Social Care.

Additionally schools can also use the opportunity to remind parents/carers about the need to know who the adult is that is collecting the child from school and their policy on older siblings collecting primary aged children or children with additional needs.