

## Pick up and Drop off

Updated: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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## ***Intention***

This policy prioritises child safety and well-being by establishing clear expectations for any individual dropping off or collecting children from the nursery premises, including steps to be taken during unauthorised or non-collection scenarios. By establishing clear procedural guidelines, the nursery aims to minimise disruptions, ensure the well-being of all children, and maintain a secure and predictable environment throughout the day.

## ***Legislative context***

### Legal guidelines and frameworks

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2025 (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 (KCSiE)
- Data Protection Act, 2018

### Legal duties

Nurseries have a duty to ensure that each child is safely handed over to a member of staff during drop-off and remains supervised at all times while in the care of the premises. At pick-up, children must only be released to individuals with parental responsibility or those who have been authorised to collect. Staff are responsible for maintaining accurate records of children's arrival and departure times and confirming the identity of anyone collecting a child where necessary.

## ***Acronyms used in this policy***

PR: Parental Responsibility

## ***Definitions of terms used in this policy***

### Parental responsibility

The legal rights, duties, powers, and responsibilities that a parent or guardian has in relation to a child and the child's welfare. This includes ensuring appropriate arrangements are made for the child's care, including authorising who is allowed to collect the child from nursery.

### Emergency contact

A person nominated by parents/carers who can be contacted in the event that the parent/carer cannot be reached in an emergency. Emergency contacts should be trusted adults who are aware they have been nominated and are able to respond promptly if the nursery needs to contact them.

### Authorised collector

An individual who has been given permission by a parent/carer with parental responsibility to collect a child from the nursery. The nursery must have prior notification of this person, and their details should be recorded within the child's Family profile.

## ***Guiding principles***

This policy is guided by the principle that transitions between home and the nursery should be calm, secure, and well managed to support children's emotional well-being as well as their

safety. Clear and consistent procedures help children feel settled on arrival and confident during collection, while also supporting strong communication between staff and families. The nursery recognises that these daily transitions are important opportunities for sharing information, maintaining safeguarding practices, and ensuring every child leaves the premises safely with an authorised adult.

### ***Roles and responsibilities***

Role	Responsibility
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that children are safely received during drop offs and collections</li> <li>• Supervise children at all times during arrival and collection periods</li> <li>• Release children only to authorised or approved collectors</li> <li>• Follow the identity checking procedures for unfamiliar collectors when necessary</li> <li>• Record accurate arrival and departure times for each child</li> <li>• Follow procedures for late or non-collection</li> <li>• Professionally communicate relevant information to parents/carers during drop-off and pick-up</li> </ul>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure clear procedures for pick-up and drop-off are in place and followed</li> <li>• Provide guidance and training to staff on safe collection procedures</li> <li>• Maintain up-to-date records of authorised collectors and contact details</li> <li>• Support staff in managing late collection or safeguarding concerns</li> <li>• Monitor and review the policy to ensure it is consistently implemented</li> </ul>
Parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure children are dropped off and collected within agreed times</li> <li>• Notify the nursery in advance of any changes to collection or drop off schedules or authorisation preferences via email or Family message</li> <li>• Provide accurate and up-to-date contact details for all emergency contacts and authorised collectors</li> <li>• Support the nursery's procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children</li> <li>• Provide the nursery with all relevant legal documentation highlighting changes to parental responsibilities</li> </ul>

### ***Updates to this policy***

This policy may be unilaterally updated at any time with immediate effect to ensure clarity, reflect the nursery's current operational practices, and maintain compliance with the latest government legislation and guidance. Please refer to the 'More Information' section on the website.

### ***Dropping children off at nursery***

When children are dropped off at the nursery, it is the responsibility of the person bringing them to ensure they are handed directly into the care of a staff member. They should wait until a staff member is able to receive the child and a verbal handover has taken place before leaving. Children should arrive with all necessary belongings for the day, including any items required for activities or personal care.

#### What information should be passed on at drop-off

Individuals dropping children off at the nursery must provide any relevant information regarding the child's well-being to ensure that appropriate care can be offered throughout the day. This includes:

- Any medical updates or medication requirements:
  - If a child has experienced any changes in their medical condition since their last attendance, or requires medication during their time at the nursery, staff must be informed in accordance with the Sickness and Medication Policy.
- Any updates to health and wellbeing:
  - If a child has had any injuries, illnesses, or changes in health since the child's last attendance (e.g., bumps, bruises, minor accidents)<sup>1</sup> or is experiencing any active symptoms or conditions that may affect their participation in nursery activities.
- Any changes to daily needs or factors which may affect mood or behaviour:
  - Detail any updates to sleep patterns, emotional state, or any significant events at home that may impact the child's day.
- Any personal belongings or valuables which staff need to be aware of:
  - If a child has any electronic devices or other personal items that should be stored securely in the nursery office during the day.

If information shared at drop-off indicates a change in a child's needs that requires additional measures e.g., updating a Health Care Plan or reviewing a Risk Assessment, or if the nursery cannot safely accommodate the child's current needs, e.g., if a new medication has been started within the last 24 hours, the management team reserves the right to temporarily refuse entry until appropriate support measures are in place.

#### What to do if a child is distressed at drop-off

Drop-off and pick-up moments can be significant transitions in a child's day, and the way these are handled can affect how comfortable and confident a child feels in the nursery environment. If a child becomes upset or anxious during drop-off, staff will provide reassurance and support to help them settle. The individual dropping off is encouraged to stay briefly to offer comfort but should hand the child over to staff once the initial reassurance has begun, where possible, to avoid extending this process.

Once in the care of the nursery, staff may use familiar routines, comfort objects, or gentle engagement to help the child feel secure and ready to join activities. Open communication between staff and those dropping off is welcomed to promote smooth future transitions and reduce separation anxiety over time.

#### ***Collecting children from the nursery***

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the Accident and Incident Policy for more details.

### The importance of creating positive and calm handovers

Collection handovers are an important part of the child's day, marking the transition from the nursery environment back to home. These moments provide an opportunity for staff and the individual collecting to exchange key information about the child's experiences, wellbeing, and any important updates from the day. Routine information such as sleep times and meal intake will be shared via the Family app throughout the day.

By sharing highlights of the child's day, achievements, and enjoyable experiences, staff can help families feel connected to their child's time at nursery. This approach reinforces a supportive and welcoming environment, ensuring that children leave the setting on a positive note while parents/carers remain informed and confident in the care their child has received.

### Sharing sensitive information at handovers

While handovers provide an opportunity to share information about a child's day, some matters may be sensitive and require a more private conversation. Where possible, parents/carers will be informed in advance if staff need to discuss sensitive information and be invited into a quieter area of the nursery so the conversation can take place privately. Staff will avoid discussing sensitive matters in front of other parents, children, or members of the public, and will also avoid raising such issues directly in front of the child wherever possible, to avoid causing unnecessary upset.

The nursery operates an open door approach, and parents or carers are encouraged to speak with staff if they have concerns or wish to discuss something in more detail. Where possible, parents should be offered the opportunity to step inside the nursery to have these conversations in a more appropriate setting. However, staff must also ensure that required staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times, and in some circumstances a more suitable time may be arranged if staff are unable to leave the room immediately.

### ***Changes to drop-off or pick-up times***

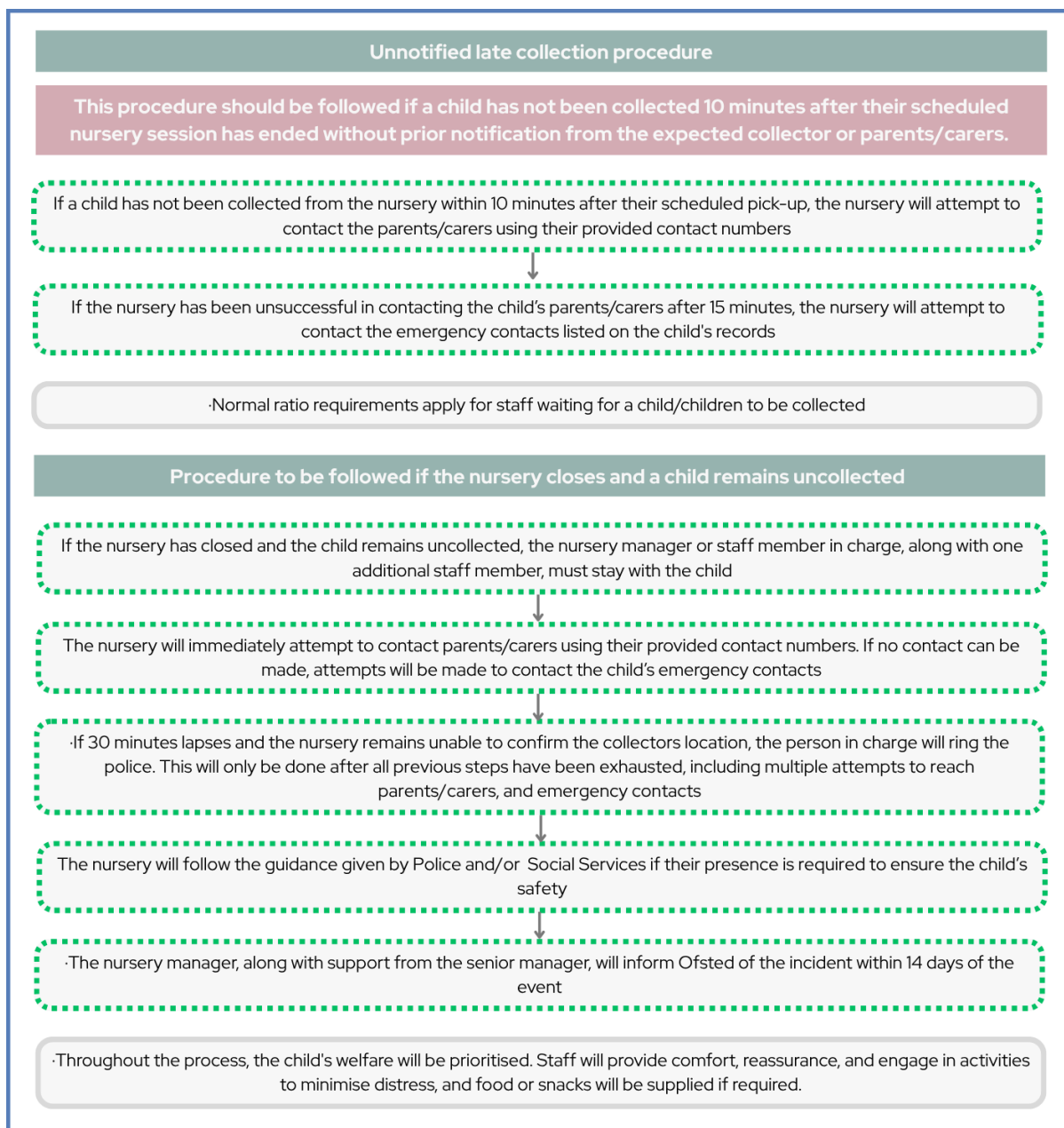
To ensure that the nursery continues to operate safely and smoothly, any changes to a child's usual drop-off or pick-up times must be communicated to the nursery in advance. For further guidance, please review the table below:

Changes to collection time	Nursery expectations
Early drop-off	<p>Children should not be brought to the nursery before their allocated session start time. If a child arrives early without a pre-booked session, entry may be refused if the nursery cannot safely accommodate them due to staff-to-child ratio requirements or if earlier sessions are already fully booked.</p> <p>If the nursery can facilitate the early drop-off, parents/carers will be charged the full fee for the earlier session accessed, not just for the additional time the child has attended the nursery.</p>

Late drop-off	<p>If a child will be arriving later than their usual drop-off time, parents/carers should inform the nursery in advance.</p> <p>This ensures staff are aware of the delayed arrival and prevents late attendance procedures from being initiated, as outlined in the Attendance Policy.</p>
Early pick-up	<p>The nursery offers flexibility for early pick-ups within a child's allocated session, understanding that occasional adjustments may be needed. However, individuals collecting are asked to inform the nursery in advance if they plan to collect their child early wherever possible.</p> <p>This allows staff to ensure the child is prepared for pick-up and to adjust routines where necessary, minimising disruption to planned activities, mealtimes, or sleep periods.</p> <p>The full session fee remains payable even if the child is collected early.</p>
Late pick-up	<p>If the individual due to collect a child anticipates being late, they must contact the nursery as soon as possible.</p> <p>Early notification allows the nursery to plan effectively as late pick-ups may require adjustments to staffing schedules to maintain within legal staff-to-child ratio requirements.</p> <p>Late fees may be applied in accordance with nursery terms and conditions.</p>

Late pick-up procedure without nursery notification

If a child has not been collected by the end of their scheduled session time and the nursery has not been made aware of this previously, the below procedure is followed:



### **Recording drop offs and collections**

As soon as a child enters or leaves the nursery, this must be recorded on the Fire Register. This ensures the nursery maintains an accurate record of all individuals on the premises, which can be used in the event of an emergency and cross-checked against completed headcounts.

### **Setting collection passwords**

Each child must have a collection password recorded on their Family profile, which is used as part of the nursery's [collection verification process](#). This password is set by parents/carers and can be updated at any time if needed. Anyone collecting a child who is not already known to the nursery must provide the correct password before they are allowed entry.

### **Setting verification photos for authorised collectors and emergency contacts**

The nursery requires all parents, carers, and authorised collectors listed on a child's Family profile to have a clear digital photo uploaded as their contact image. This helps staff to confidently verify the identity of anyone arriving to collect a child. Photos must be recent, clearly show the individual's face, and must not include any other people or obstructions. Parents/carers are responsible for keeping these images up-to-date to ensure the effectiveness of the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

### ***Individuals authorised to collect***

Parents/carers with parental responsibility may nominate other individuals as authorised collectors to collect their child on their behalf. All authorised collectors must be at least 16 years old.

Any person authorised to collect a child must be added to the child's "Family Tab" on their Family profile, with the note "Authorised to collect" included in the Relation to Child comment box. This ensures the nursery maintains an up-to-date record of all individuals permitted to collect a child, along with their contact details<sup>2</sup>.

### Nominating an emergency contact as an authorised collector

Each child must have at least three emergency contacts listed on their Family profile. These individuals must be at least 16 years old and are authorised to act on the parent/carer's behalf in an emergency. If a parent/carer wishes to designate an emergency contact as an authorised collector, they must notify the nursery manager in writing so that the change can be recorded on the child's Family profile and communicated to the staff team.

### Nominating a staff member as an authorised collector

If a nursery staff member has a personal arrangement with a family to drop off or collect their child, they must still be officially recorded as an authorised collector on the child's Family profile. In these circumstances, the staff member is acting in a private capacity and not on behalf of the nursery. The nursery accepts no responsibility for any incidents or actions that may occur during this personal arrangement.

### Collection procedures for different types of authorised collectors

The table below provides the details of the nurseries approach to authorised collectors. These procedures are in place to minimise the risk of a child leaving the premises without the explicit approval of a parent/carer. Just because a person is familiar or is known to the nursery community does not mean that they have the appropriate authorisation to collect a child. Therefore, permissions and identities need to be verified at each collection to ensure these remain safe and in accordance with parental consents.

Please note, the acronym PR used within the following table refers to 'Parental Responsibility'.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see the [Further Reading](#) section of this policy for guidance on how this process is completed.

Authorised collection procedures				
Type of authorised collector	Individuals with parental responsibility	Authorised frequent collector	Authorised regular collector – defined times	Ad hoc collector
Definition	The child's mother, the child's father or someone else with legal parental responsibility for a child.	Someone who collects frequently, and parents/carers are happy for them to collect without needing their permission each time.	Someone who collects on pre-agreed days/times, and parents/carers are happy for them to collect without needing their permission at those times.	Someone who is collecting a child but requires parents/carers explicit consent each and every time they do so.
When can they collect?	Whenever	Whenever	Only on pre-agreed days/times	Only with the verbal <b>and</b> written approval of someone with PR.
Photo ID must be presented by the person collecting	Until the person is confidently known by the nursery.			
The child's collection password must be given by the person collecting	Until the person is confidently known by the nursery.			
Someone with PR must send a digital photo of the collector to the management team prior to the person collecting	The management team must share the photo with the staff team and this should be referred to until they can confidently recognise the collector.			
Someone with PR must give verbal <b>and</b> written confirmation of the collector's first and last name and when they are collecting to the management team prior to the person collecting.	Required for the first-time if not known by the nursery. Can only be revoked by court order.	Required for the first-time until permission is revoked by someone with PR.	Required for the first time until permission is revoked by someone with PR. At times outside the pre-agreed times, it is required every time.	Required every time.

### Removing or changing an authorised collector

Any changes to the identities of authorised collectors, including updates to contact details, must be submitted in writing by the child's parent/carer to the nursery manager.

The managers must then ensure that the child's Family profile is updated to reflect these changes and any additional information received, such as photos, written authorisations, and verbal confirmations, are shared with the wider staff team. This ensures that all relevant staff members can confidently verify authorised collectors and follow the correct procedures when releasing a child.

### **Collection by an unauthorised individual**

If an individual arrives at the nursery to collect a child and the nursery has not been informed of this arrangement by someone with parental responsibility, they will be asked to wait outside the premises. The management team will immediately contact a person with parental responsibility to verify the individual's authorisation for collection.

Once verbal confirmation is provided, the standard [authorised collection procedures](#) must be followed. In rare cases, exceptions to these procedures may be made, but only with explicit approval from the manager. If the manager is unavailable, the senior manager must be contacted to gain consent for this exception.

If there is any uncertainty regarding authorisation, the child must not be released.

### ***Restricting collection rights for individuals with parental responsibility***

The nursery is legally required to allow any individual with parental responsibility to collect a child unless there is a legitimate reason indicating that the person may pose a risk to the child.

If a parent/carer wishes to prevent another individual with parental responsibility from collecting their child, the nursery must be provided with an official court order that legally restricts that person's access. The nursery will adhere to all written court or care orders, and any relevant documentation will be securely filed in the child's individual record.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to keep the nursery informed of any changes to custody arrangements or legal restrictions.

### ***Refusing collection due to safeguarding concerns***

If there is reason to believe that an authorised collector or an individual with parental responsibility may pose a risk to the child—for example, if they appear under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or display aggressive behaviour—the child must not be released into their custody. In such cases, a statutory service, such as the police or social care, must be informed, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Improper use of car seats**

Children under the age of three are legally required to travel in an appropriate car seat when in a car or van. If it is observed that this requirement is not being followed, staff must attempt to prevent the child from leaving the premises, and the incident must be reported in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. If preventing the child from leaving is not possible or would create a safety risk, the police must be contacted immediately.

Exceptions to this requirement are limited to:

- The child is traveling in a licensed taxi or minicab
- The vehicle has a medical exemption with accompanying documentation
- The vehicle does not have a rear seat seatbelt fitted

### **Lockdown initiations during collections or drop-offs**

If an unauthorised individual who poses a potential safety risk attempts to collect a child, or if there is any concern about a potential intruder during drop-off or collection times, the nursery will immediately initiate a lockdown as per the Emergency Lockdown Policy. Please see this policy for more details.

### **Staff members completing drop-offs or pick-ups as part of their work duties**

If a nursery staff member is required to drop off or pick up a child as part of their professional duties for the nursery – and this is not a pre-arranged agreement where the staff member is an authorised collector in a personal capacity – the following conditions must be met:

- The staff member must follow all vehicle safety procedures outlined within the Health and Safety Policy
- Normal ratio requirements must be in place
- Written consent must be given from someone with parental responsibility prior to this

### **Assistance entering or leaving the nursery**

For families requiring assistance entering or leaving the building, or reaching their vehicle, staff are available to escort children to and from the entrance. During this escort, the child remains the responsibility of the authorised collector at all times and should never be left unsupervised. Staff must ensure that all staff-to-child ratio requirements are maintained within the premises prior to supporting with this process. If leaving the premises could place the remaining staff or children at risk of harm, additional assistance must be obtained prior to support being offered.

### **Responsibility for children during drop-offs or collections**

While on the nursery premises, parents/carers or authorised collectors are responsible for the direct care and supervision of their children until they are safely handed over to nursery staff. Responsibility resumes once the child has been collected.

### **Essential knowledge for staff from this policy**

<b>Key learning</b>	<b>Level</b>
Explain what information should be passed on at drop-off and pick up	L1
Explain what to do if a child is distressed at drop off	L1
Explain how sensitive information should be passed on during collection or drop offs	L1
Explain the nurseries expectations for parents/carers when changing drop off or collection times	L1
Explains the procedure to be followed if a child remains uncollected after their scheduled drop off time without prior notification	L1
Explain how drop off and collection times are recorded	L1
Explain how collection passwords are set and where these can be located	L1

Key learning	Level
Explain the conditions for assigning authorised collectors, including when this is a staff member, setting collection photos and what steps to take if any changes are required to those authorised	L2
Explain the different collection procedures for authorised collectors	L1
Explain what steps must be taken if an unauthorised individual attempts to collect a child or if a collection sparks safeguarding concerns	L1
Explain the nursery procedures on restricting collection rights for individuals with parental responsibility	L2
Explain the procedures to be followed for staff members completing drop offs or collections as part of their work duties	L2

### **Training requirements**

There are no additional training requirements to accompany this policy.

### **Monitoring and review**

<b>Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the setting's fire registers to ensure these have been completed correctly</li> </ul>
<b>Confirm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm all children have an assigned collection password</li> <li>Confirm all authorised collectors are indicated on Family and have an accompany image attached to their Family contact sheet</li> </ul>
<b>Observe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe a staff member welcome a child into nursery</li> <li>Observe a staff member complete a hand over</li> <li>Observe a staff member verify a visitor's identity</li> </ul>
<b>Ask</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask a staff member what steps they would take if an unauthorised individual attempted to collect a child</li> </ul>

### **Further reading**

Name	Summary of content	Source	Link
Child car seats: The law	Legal overview relating to the use of car seats for children	GOV.UK	<a href="#">Link</a>
Adding and inviting contacts on Family	Guidance on how to add contacts onto a child's family profile	GOV.UK	<a href="#">Link</a>