PARK SCHOOL

Collection, Uncollected and Missing Child Policy

Applies to	Reception, as part of EYFS, and Years 1 to 6
Policy reference	Collection, Uncollected and Missing Child Policy
Policy owner	Headteacher
Reviewed by	NW / RCat / EW
Next review	Michaelmas 2027

1. Purpose and scope

Park School is committed to ensuring that every child is safe, appropriately supervised, accounted for at all times and released only to a parent, carer or other authorised adult. This policy applies to Reception, as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and Years 1 to 6. It covers normal collection, changes to collection arrangements, late collection, children who remain uncollected when the School closes, and the response when a child is missing from the school site or an off-site activity.

The child's welfare is paramount. Staff will remain calm, reassure children, maintain supervision of the wider group and follow safeguarding and emergency procedures where collection arrangements cannot be verified, a child remains uncollected or a child cannot be accounted for.

2. Responsibilities

- Parents and carers must provide accurate contact, emergency-contact and authorised-collector information and update the School promptly when circumstances change.
- Class teachers, club leaders, After School Care Club staff and office staff must follow the agreed handover and recording procedures.
- Senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads oversee escalation where a child's welfare cannot be confirmed or collection concerns indicate a safeguarding risk.

3. Information held by the School

At admission and at the beginning of each academic year, parents and carers are asked to provide and confirm:

- home address and telephone numbers
- work and mobile telephone numbers for parents or carers
- names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults authorised to collect the child
- authorised emergency contacts
- information about parental responsibility, legal access and any court order or legally enforceable restriction relevant to collection
- relevant SEND, medical, communication or pastoral information that may affect safe handover or late-care arrangements

Parents and carers must tell the School Office promptly about changes, including changes arising from separation, moving home or amended emergency contacts. Records will be stored securely and shared only with staff who need the information to safeguard the child.

4. Normal collection arrangements

Children will be released only to a parent or carer or another adult authorised to collect them. Staff must supervise handover and must not permit a child to leave until the collecting adult is present and the arrangement is clear.

Parents and carers must ensure that the School has accurate information about who may collect. They remain responsible for ensuring that any authorised collector is suitable and understands the collection arrangements.

5. Changes to collection arrangements

Parents and carers should notify the class teacher or School Office in advance if a different adult will collect their child. Notification may be made through the agreed year-group email address or by contacting the School Office. Any change arising during the school day must be reported directly to the School Office, which will inform the relevant member of staff.

Messages passed indirectly through a child will not normally be accepted as authority to change collection arrangements. Where arrangements are unclear, the child will remain in the School's care while the School contacts a parent or carer to verify the change.

6. Authorised collectors and identity verification

Where a member of staff does not recognise an authorised collector, the child must remain in the School's care until the adult's identity and authority to collect have been satisfactorily verified. Staff may contact a parent or carer, request photographic identification and use an agreed collection password or another verification method.

If staff cannot verify the arrangement, the child will not be released. The School Office and a senior member of staff must be informed immediately. Where the circumstances raise a safeguarding concern, the DSL or DDSL will be informed and safeguarding procedures followed.

7. Separated parents and legal restrictions

Parents and carers must inform the School of any court order or other legally enforceable restriction affecting collection or contact and provide appropriate documentary evidence. Staff must not make informal assumptions about parental responsibility or withhold a child solely because of a parental disagreement.

Any uncertainty or dispute at collection must be referred to a senior leader and, where appropriate, the DSL or DDSL before the child is released. The child should be kept away from confrontation and reassured while the matter is managed.

8. Late collection at the end of the school day

Reception

- A Reception child who has not been collected at the end of the school day will be supervised in a Reception classroom from 3.10pm until 3.45pm.
- If no message has been received, reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parents, carers or authorised emergency contacts.
- At 4.00pm, an uncollected child will be taken to the After School Care Club. The School may charge the applicable ASCC session fee.

Years 1 to 6

An uncollected child will remain supervised by an appropriate member of staff or be taken to the School Office. If no message has been received, the School Office will contact the parents, carers and, where necessary, authorised emergency contacts. At 4.00pm the child will be taken to ASCC and the applicable session fee may be charged.

9. Collection following clubs and activities

If a child attending an after-school club has not been collected by 4.40pm, the child will be taken to ASCC. The club leader or ASCC staff will ensure that parents, carers or authorised emergency contacts are telephoned and that the action is recorded. The applicable ASCC session fee may be charged.

10. Welfare while awaiting collection

Throughout a period of late collection, the child will be appropriately supervised, reassured and cared for. Staff will consider the child's individual needs, including access to drinking water, food where appropriate, medication, toileting, communication support and any SEND, medical or pastoral requirements. Suitable staffing and supervision will be maintained until the child is safely handed over or safeguarding arrangements are made.

11. Child remaining uncollected when ASCC closes

ASCC can supervise children until 6.00pm. If a child remains uncollected at closing time, the supervising member of staff will immediately notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the DSL or DDSL. Further attempts will be made to contact parents, carers and authorised emergency contacts.

The DSL or DDSL will consider the circumstances and follow safeguarding procedures, including contacting Children's Social Care and/or the Police where necessary to safeguard the child. Staff must not take an uncollected child home, transport the child in a private vehicle unless specifically authorised under an emergency plan, or leave the child unattended.

12. Recording and safeguarding escalation

All significant actions must be recorded, including the time collection was expected, supervision provided, telephone calls and messages, people contacted, decisions made, the time of collection and the identity of the collecting adult. Any safeguarding concern or unusual circumstance must be reported to the DSL or DDSL without delay.

Repeated late collection, unexplained changes to collection arrangements, inability to contact parents or carers, concerning behaviour by a collecting adult or other emerging patterns will be reviewed by the DSL or DDSL. The review will consider whether pastoral support, early help, referral to Children's Social Care, Police involvement or another safeguarding response is required.

13. Unsafe or unauthorised collection

A child will not be released to an unauthorised person or where staff reasonably believe that release may place the child at immediate risk. The School Office, a senior leader and the DSL or DDSL must be informed. Staff will attempt to contact another authorised adult and will seek advice from Children's Social Care or the Police where necessary.

Where a collecting adult appears impaired or otherwise unable to provide safe care, staff should not enter into avoidable confrontation. The child should remain supervised in a safe place while senior staff and the DSL or DDSL assess the situation and contact another authorised adult or statutory services as appropriate.

14. Prevention and accounting for children

Staff must maintain appropriate supervision and know the location of the children in their care. Registers, headcounts, handovers and transition checks must be completed accurately. In EYFS, statutory staffing requirements must be maintained. During off-site activities, supervision must follow the approved visit risk assessment and Educational Visits Policy. Any discrepancy must be investigated immediately.

15. Missing child from the school site

If a child cannot be accounted for following a register, headcount, transition or at any other time, staff must act immediately. The following procedure applies:

• maintain the safety, supervision and wellbeing of all other children

• re-check the register, expected attendance, collection information and any authorised movement of the child

• notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the DSL or DDSL without delay

• organise a coordinated search of the immediate vicinity and school site, including all areas the child may reasonably have accessed, entrances, exits and known hazards

• ensure a responsible adult remains at the point where the child was last seen and that communication is maintained between searchers

• check available information, including office messages and CCTV where available and appropriate, without delaying urgent action

The senior member of staff will lead the response. This will normally be the Headteacher, DSL, Bursar, Nursery Manager or Director of Studies. For a Nursery child, the Deputy Nursery Manager or Room Leader may lead until a more senior member of staff is available.

The Police must be contacted without delay where there is an immediate risk to the child, the child is particularly vulnerable, abduction is suspected, the child may have left the site, or circumstances otherwise require an emergency response. In other situations, if the initial search does not locate the child promptly, the senior member of staff will contact parents or carers and the Police. A fixed waiting period must not delay contacting emergency services where risk is elevated.

When contacting the Police, staff will provide all relevant information available, including the child's name, age, description, clothing, photograph where available, medical or SEND needs, time and place last seen, likely locations and actions already taken. Once the Police take control of the search, staff will cooperate fully while continuing to safeguard the other children.

16. Missing child during an off-site visit

The Visit Leader assumes immediate operational responsibility and follows the approved visit emergency plan, the Educational Visits Policy and the following procedure:

• secure and supervise the rest of the group and complete an immediate headcount

• check the immediate area, last known location, toilets, transport and agreed meeting points without exposing other children to risk

• alert venue staff, security or the activity provider and request that exits and appropriate search procedures are managed

• contact the Headteacher, Nursery Manager, DSL or another nominated school emergency contact as soon as practicable

• contact the Police or appropriate emergency service immediately where risk is high, and promptly if the initial search does not locate the child

• contact parents or carers through the agreed senior lead or emergency-contact arrangement so information is coordinated and accurate

The Visit Leader must not delay an emergency call merely to obtain prior authorisation from the School. Staffing must remain sufficient to supervise the wider group while the search and emergency response continue.

17. Child found

When the child is found, staff will check the child's immediate welfare, arrange first aid or medical attention if needed, inform the Police, parents or carers and senior leaders, and reunite the child with a suitable adult. Staff should respond calmly and avoid blame or punitive questioning. Any disclosure or safeguarding concern must be reported to the DSL or DDSL immediately.

18. Recording, notification and review

A detailed written record must be completed as soon as practicable. It must include the circumstances, times, people informed, search areas, decisions, Police involvement, how and where the child was found, the child's welfare and any subsequent action. Relevant safeguarding, accident, near-miss, insurance and regulatory notifications will be made where required.

Following any missing-child incident or significant near miss, the Senior Leadership Team and DSL will conduct a formal review. The review will consider supervision, registers, staffing, site security, communication, risk assessment, individual needs and whether policies, training or practice require amendment. Parents or carers will be informed of the outcome as appropriate.

19. Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- After School Care Club procedures
- Attendance and Registration Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines policies
- SEND Policy and Individual Healthcare Plans
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

20. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and DSL will monitor the implementation of this policy, including patterns of late collection, safeguarding escalation, missing-child incidents and near misses. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a significant incident, change in statutory requirements or identified concern about practice.