

## 17 PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED FROM PLAYGROUP/LATE COLLECTION POLICY

### COLLECTING YOUR CHILD ON TIME

We have found it necessary to send out a letter as a minority of parents/carers have been late collecting their children. As a result we have set up a Late Policy which means that anyone picking their child up late will be charged a £1 per minute from the end of the session. Parents will be asked to sign a late form with the date and time.

It is extremely important that you are available for your child as soon as the session finishes. Being late can cause your child to feel stressed, anxious and insecure.

Playgroup Times Monday - Friday morning 8.45am - 11.45am

Monday - Friday afternoon 12.15pm - 3.15pm

All day session 9.00am - 3.00pm

Please be outside the playgroup ready to collect your child at least 5 minutes before the end of the session.

### **In an emergency**

If an emergency happens and you cannot collect your child on time

- Call the playgroup 020 8776 8736
- Let us know who will be collecting your child on your behalf.

It is essential that Royston Playgroup know who the person is. No child will be allowed to leave with someone who is not known to us.

Royston Playgroup takes failing to collect your child on time very seriously. If a child is left unattended, in line with our policy, we will contact Social Services and your child will be placed in their care. If a parent/carer is late collecting their child on more than three occasions we may find it necessary to withdraw your child's place.

## **PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED FROM PLAYGROUP**

Please ensure that before a child starts Playgroup details of the child i.e. date of birth, address, address of both parents, and their contact details, who has parental responsibility for the child etc. are obtained. It is also important that details of the child's emergency contacts are sought. Please remind parents, on a regular basis, to inform the school of changes to any of these details.

### **Children Not Collected from Playgroup**

This protocol should be followed on those occasions where a child has not been collected from playgroup at the end of the day and it has not proved possible to contact the parent(s)/carer(s) or the emergency contact person for the child. These situations are time consuming for the playgroup and can be upsetting for the child, but in the majority of cases the child is collected albeit late from playgroup.

Where children are collected late from playgroup on a regular basis, then the playgroup must make a referral to the Education Welfare Service and the matter followed up with the parent(s)/carer(s). This protocol is not to be used to threaten or punish parents who are habitually late in collecting their children.

However, there will be the occasions when parents/carers fail to collect a child due to an accident, illness or other emergency which will result in the child not being able to go home at the end of the day. On these occasions, it is important that a protocol is available which will enable the child to be looked after in a safe and welcoming environment.

The guiding principle in dealing with any situation in which a child is not collected from playgroup must be to minimise distress to the child and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people for as long as possible.

### **Protocol – for Playgroups**

1. If a child has not been collected, the playgroup should make every possible attempt to contact the parent(s)/carer(s). The child may well be able to indicate if something out of the ordinary has happened at home (e.g. parental

illness or absence). On some occasions another parent may offer to take a child home with them. Playgroups should never release a child into the care of another adult without the consent of the parent(s)/ carer(s). Neither should members of staff take, or drive, children to their home or to the home of the child(ren).

2. Initial attempt to contact parents/carers should be made when **15 minutes** have elapsed after playgroup closing time. After **30 minutes** have elapsed contact with all emergency numbers supplied by the family should be attempted.
3. If no contact has been made and no one has arrived to collect the child when **one hour** after playgroup closing time has elapsed, then the playgroup should contact Childrens Social Care on **0208 461 7014/7309/7379/7026. Fax number 01689 897475** and provide name, date of birth and address of the child; the names of the parents/carers and their contact numbers plus any other relevant information regarding the child and their family.
4. The Duty Social Worker will make arrangements for the child until the parent(s)/carer(s) can be traced. Please wait with the child in playgroup until the social worker arrives, or, in exceptional circumstances, it is agreed that the playgroup will bring the child to the Social Care Office
5. A child should never be sent to an after-school club/play centre (unless arrangements have previously been made with all parties) if the parent(s)/carer(s) has not arrived. It is the responsibility of the playgroup to follow these procedures in order to contact the parent. After-school clubs/play centres have their own procedures for uncollected children.
6. These arrangements can also be implemented in the following circumstances:
  - Where a parent does not arrive to collect the child and no contact can be made because the telephone numbers (including any emergency numbers) provided by the parent/carer have been cut off or are unobtainable.

- Where the person calling to collect the child is not considered an appropriate adult, eg is under age, appears intoxicated, and it has not been possible to contact the parent/carer or the emergency contact.

7. Once the child is in the care of Social Care, they will take the responsibility for tracing the parent(s)/carer(s).

### **Protocol – for Children's Social Care**

1. On receipt of a call from playgroup at or after one hour following the playgroup closing time, Children's Social Care will need to be provided with relevant information about the child(ren) and their circumstances. It is important that accurate information is provided by the playgroup to Social Care including all relevant names, addresses and telephone numbers - a copy of the playgroup's record sheet for the child would provide a helpful basis for this. If the child has mentioned any recent changes in family circumstances or if there has been other occasions on which a child has not been collected from playgroup, this information should also be conveyed to the duty social worker.
2. In most cases, parent(s)/carer(s) do arrive to collect their child - in less than 1% of all cases is it necessary for another agency to be contacted by the playgroup. The duty social worker will therefore want to discuss with the referring teacher how long the child can remain at the playgroup since this is the place to which the parent/carer will go first if they have been delayed in collecting their child(ren).
3. Children's Social Care will identify a local foster carer(s) who are able to look after a playgroup child on an emergency basis where s/he has not been collected from playgroup. The child will be placed with that carer on a temporary basis as soon as possible. This placement will be treated as an informal arrangement if the child is collected before 10 pm. After that time, since the child will then be likely to remain overnight, s/he will be formally accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act.

4. If a child is to be removed from playgroup premises in these circumstances, then arrangements should be made for a note to be left for the attention of the parent/carer should they subsequently arrive at the playgroup asking them to contact Children's Social Care.
  
5. At such point as Children's Social Care is making arrangements for a child to be placed with a foster carer then the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) will be advised of the details of the child (Police will need to be informed by an 87A). No action should be taken by CAIT at this stage other than to note the details, complete relevant checks and to advise Social Care whether or not the Police are aware of any reason why the parent/carer has failed to collect their child. Should the parent/carer not contact any agency by 10 pm and the child be accommodated, then the Police will again be informed since the child will be regarded as having been abandoned necessitating consideration of a Police criminal investigation.
  
6. At each stage, it will be the intention of Children's Social Care to seek to return the child to the care of his or her parent(s)/carer(s) unless there is evidence of a risk of significant harm.

**Nothing in this protocol changes the responsibilities of each agency as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'The London Child Protection Procedures'.**

PLAYLEADER SIGNATURE.....DATED.....

COMMITTEE SIGNATURE.....DATED.....

Taken from Children not collected from school 2.Nov11 Bromley Safeguarding Children Board. Correct as of JUN 2021

