

Applecroft School



Safeguarding Before and After School & Late Collection Policy

Person Responsible:	Lead DSL
Review Cycle:	Annual
Date of Issue:	September 2026
Review Date:	September 2027

This policy is based on the [NSPCC's factsheet of the same name](#) (September 2018)

Safeguarding Before and After School & Late Collection Policy

1) Introduction:

School Vision:

To be a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life'.

Mission Statement:

'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives'

Shared Values:

- Ambition and Leadership,
- Kindness and Supportiveness,
- Respect and Honesty,
- Determination and Resilience

Aim:

We aim to provide a safe and caring environment. In the event that a child is not collected or delayed, they will be reassured in order to cause as little distress as possible. We will inform parents/carers of our procedure so if they are unavoidably delayed they will be aware of the procedures being followed.

Safeguarding as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), means:

- *providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge*
- *protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online*
- *preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development*
- *ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.*

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) further extends this definition to include:

- *promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.*

Child/ren: The legal definition of a child in the UK includes everyone under the age of 18.

This Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies that relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Children Who Are Absent from School Policy

This policy has been written to:

- support parents/carers when considering drop off and collection of their child/ren
- assist the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in considering drop off and collection arrangements for children, to ensure effective safeguarding practice
- assist staff when managing late collection of children.

Who is it for and when should it be used?

This policy applies to all pupils who attend Applecroft School and is used to support and guide both parents and staff.

This policy will be applied where:

- children are collected late,
- children are not collected
- it is not safe for children to go home unaccompanied
- there are concerns about supervision before and after school (childcare by a sibling/child walking to or from school alone)
- there are concerns about a parent/carer's ability to offer safe care because they are under the influence of alcohol/drugs or there are concerns about their mental health state

Parents/Carers of Applecroft School will be given a copy of this policy when their child first starts school with us.

2) Children walking to/from school alone:

There is no set legal age where children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. It is an offence, however, to leave a child alone if it places them at risk and therefore schools have a continual obligation to alert relevant authorities if they believe this is the case. This could, theoretically, include the school journey. Parents/carers should make their decision based on their child's maturity, ability and the safety and distance of the route to school.

At Applecroft School our policy states that children in **Year 4 or below** should be accompanied by an adult or an older sibling (see below). This is based on guidance from both the NSPCC and DfE.

The NSPCC advise the following: children under 8 should not be outdoors for a considerable length of time. Unaccompanied children under the age of about 12 should not be home alone for more than a very short period of time. Schools are only responsible for safety on the school journey where they have specifically arranged transport.

3) Older siblings accompanying a child to/from school on a parent/carer's behalf:

At Applecroft School our policy is not to send younger children home with an older sibling unless the sibling is **aged 14 years or older**. This follows guidance from the NSPCC who recommend that no one under 14 should be left to care for a younger child.

There is no law determining the age at which a sibling can accompany a child to school. It is ultimately up to the parents to make the judgment of whether they feel this is appropriate. Factors that parents should consider include:

- The maturity of all the children involved,
- The length and nature of the journey home,
- The behaviour of all the children involved and
- The relationship between the children collecting/being collected.

4) Late/Non-Collection of Child/ren:

In the event that an authorised adult does not collect a child, we will put into practice these agreed procedures.

Methods:

Parents/carers of children starting Applecroft School and Nursery are asked to provide specific information including:

- Home address and telephone number of parents(s) or carers
- Work telephone number if applicable
- Mobile telephone number
- Names and telephone numbers of 2 emergency contacts who are authorised by the parents/carers to collect their child from school e.g., childminder, relative, neighbour
- Information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child
- Information about who has primary responsibility for the child.

If there are any changes to any of the above, we ask that the school office is notified immediately. When there is a change to the end of the day arrangements, we ask that parents/carers inform the school office or the class teacher.

Procedures if children are not collected at the end of the school day:

We inform parents/carers that if children are not collected at the end of the day we follow the procedures below:

- In the event that the parent/carer is running late or has made alternative collection arrangements with a friend/relative, they **should ring the school office** to advise us of those changes so that both the teacher and child are aware.

If it appears there have been no alternative arrangements made for the collection of a child by the parent/carer, the school staff will take the following steps:

- The class teacher will ensure the child remains with them as they dismiss the rest of the class
- The class teacher will then take the child to the main school office. Messages will be checked for in case of late communications. If there are no messages then the parent(s)/carer(s) will be contacted by telephone. If we cannot make contact in this way the Senior Administrator will try to make contact via email
- If we are unable to contact parent(s)/carer(s) at home or work, then we will call the emergency contact(s) so an authorised adult can come and collect the child
- We will keep records of late collections on CPOMs which may be passed onto external services such as the attendance team and/or social care

- In the meantime, the child will wait with the teacher / at the school office for 15 minutes before charges for late collection may be applied.

Charges for Late or Non-Collection of Children:

Under section 457 of the Education Act 1996 and relevant Regulations, the school's Board of Trustees has the power to impose a charge on parents/carers who fail to collect their child from school within a reasonable time after the close of the school day or after school activity.

The Board of Trustees accepts that it is the responsibility of the school to ensure parents and carers are notified of the timing of the school day or after school activity and when those times are varied for a specific event or date.

The Board of Trustees has decided that, except in an **emergency situation**, where children are not collected from the school within 15 minutes after the school day or school activity ending, then a charge will be made to the child's parent/carer. Please be advised that 'traffic' does not count as an emergency situation.

The school accepts that a variety of emergencies can arise due to unforeseen circumstances and will ensure that the charge is not imposed on the parent/carer where there is a **genuine** unforeseen emergency.

Notification must be given to the school as soon as the situation arises or when collecting a child.

Charging Arrangements:

On the first collection within a term, without reasonable excuse, the parent/carer will be sent a letter reminding them to collect their child from school at 3:15pm (see Appendix 1) and a copy of this policy. If the child is collected late a second time, without a reasonable explanation, charges will be applied. It is the school's decision whether an explanation is considered 'reasonable'.

In cases where a child is not collected within the first 15 minutes of the end of the school day a charge of £5 will be made i.e., late collection between 3:15-3:30pm.

If a child is collected after 3:30pm a charge of £10 will be made for every 30-minute period that the parent/carer is late for e.g., if the parent/carer is 1 hour late they will be charged £20.

If the child has not been collected after one hour from the end of the school day or after school activity and no contact has been made with the parent or arrangements agreed we will follow our Child Protection Procedures for uncollected children.

The purpose of the charge is to meet the additional costs in salary and resources that the school incurs from late collections. When a charge has been applied, parents/carers will receive an invoice for the amount and payment must be made within 7 days of the charge being applied; failure to pay will lead to further action being taken.

Procedure for Late or Non-Collected Children

Late Collected Children

All late collections of children from school will be recorded on our electronic system 'CPOMs' under the category of punctuality and/or safeguarding. This information may be passed on to the Local Authority's School attendance team for further investigation

Where a child has 2 recorded late collections in one half term a letter will be sent home to parents/carers (see Appendix 2).

If there is no improvement in late collection a second letter will be sent, and a referral made to the Local Authority's Children's Social Care team.

School Run and Externally Led Clubs:

If children are collected late or not collected from either school run or externally run clubs, the procedures for 'Late or Non-Collected Children' will apply (see above).

Non-Collected Children:

Under no circumstances are school staff permitted to look for the parent/carer, transport the child home and/or take the child home with them.

If there has been no contact made from the parent/carer after one hour, or no staff available on the premises, the police will be telephoned and given the child's details i.e., name, DOB, address, names of parents/carers and any other contact details.

Children's Social Care may also be informed.

If the police cannot locate an appropriate adult to come for the child, they will notify children's social care via the emergency duty team, who will arrange for the child to be cared for, (possibly with foster carers).

The police may decide to take the police protection order (PPO) as part of this process.

If there are two or more such episodes within a six-week period, staff will make a referral to Children's Social Care.

A full report of the incident will be written and placed in the child's school file.

5) If parents/carers fail to collect their child:

The school will make every effort to contact the parents/carers and authorised persons whose details have been supplied. If by **4:15pm** the child remains uncollected we will apply child protection procedures and contact children's social care.

While the child remains uncollected, they will stay at school in the care of two fully vetted and familiar members of staff one of which will be a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as far as reasonably possible.

Staff should never:

- take the child home with them,
- transport the child home or

- go in search of parents/carers.

A full written report of the incident will be recorded on CPOMs and may be shared with external services including the local authority attendance team and/or social care.

6) 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 will 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 we have immediate concerns about a child's welfare and the parent/carer insists on taking the child, then we will contact the police.

In such cases the school will also make a safeguarding referral to children's social care. A full written report of the incident will be recorded.

7) What if someone else turns up to collect the child?

If someone else turns up to collect the child who is not on the 'authorised adults to collect list' we will **not** release them. In this case we will attempt to speak to parents/carers on the telephone to get verbal consent. We request that parents/carers always inform the school if someone different is going to collect their child to avoid this situation for all parties. The safety of the children will always be our priority.

If a parent/relative turns up, who does not have legal custody of the child, then the school will contact the child's legal guardian to get consent. □

8) 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 we will follow our child protection procedures (see Child Protection Policy).

9) After school activities:

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

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues unless it impacts on the school and its staff.

10) Supervision Before and After School

Where children are allowed onto the premises before the school day begins for example for 'before-school clubs' which usually begin at 7:45am, the school has to reasonably ensure that there are no inherent dangers (*The Education Act 2002; Children's Act 2004; Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984*).

The school site opens at 8:30am and doors to the building open from 8:35am. A member of staff supervises the playground from 8:30am each morning and it is from this time that the school takes responsibility for the children (unless they are attending a before school club having been given a place in the club by the school).

If you leave your child on site before this time there will be nobody to supervise the children and therefore the welfare of the children is the parent/carer's responsibility.

Applecroft School



Date XXX

Dear Parent/Carer of XXX,

Re: Late collection of child/ren

I am writing to remind you of Applecroft's Late/Non-Collection procedures as your child/ren has been collected late from school this term.

In cases where a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the end of the school day (i.e., between 3:15-3:30pm) or after school activity a charge of £5 will be made to the parent/carers. If collection is after 3:30pm, then an additional charge of £10 per every 30 minutes of lateness will be invoiced. All charges are to cover the costs of additional supervision required for your child due to your late collection.

You will receive an invoice for any late collection charges applied, if you have not already paid please ensure this is paid within 7 days of the invoice to avoid further action being taken.

The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lisa Withe
Headteacher

Applecroft School

Date XXX

Dear Parent/Carer of XXX,

Re: Child not being collected from school

I am writing to you regarding the number of times your child has been collected late from school this half term. Your child has been collected late on XXX occasions this half term. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure children are collected on time and being collected late is very distressing for the child/children concerned.

The Board of Trustees has agreed that charges will be applied for late collections. In cases where a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the end of the school day (i.e., between 3:15-3:30pm) or after school activity a charge of £5 will be made to the parent/carers. If collection is after 3:30pm, then an additional charge of £10 per every 30 minutes of lateness will be invoiced. All charges are to cover the costs of additional supervision required for your child due to your late collection.

You will receive an invoice for any late collection charges applied, if you have not done so already, please ensure these are paid within 7 days of the invoice to avoid further action being taken.

The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

This letter and attached policy are to inform you of follow-up actions which will occur following the late collection of your child.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lisa Withe
Headteacher