



**BRETHERTON ENDOWED CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Dropping off and collecting children**

“Walking in the footsteps of Jesus with our Christian family, we learn, grow, achieve and flourish together in God’s love.”

This policy is for Bretherton Endowed CE Primary School and The Hub, Bretherton Endowed Out of School Provision.

This should be read in conjunction with our current Safeguarding of Children Policy and our Prospectus.

It is intended for use in circumstances 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 siblings and children travelling to and from school alone)
- There are concerns about the parent / carer’s ability to offer safe care, possibly because they are under the influence of alcohol / drugs or there are concerns around parental mental health.
- In circumstances where you are asked by Police or Social Care not to leave school premises due to safeguarding concerns for the child.

At Bretherton, our school day commences at 8.50 when a whistle will signal the start of the day for registration at 8.55. The school day ends at 3.15. We ask parents to ensure that their child are punctual and arrive on time and are collected on time as lates can cause disruption and distress for the child and their class. School staff are responsible for the children during school opening hours, including extra curricular activities outside of normal school hours, but parents resume full responsibility for the welfare of their children once the teaching day has finished.

This document aims to clarify our position in relation to the following events:

- Children walking to / from school alone
- A Sibling accompanying a child to / from school on a parents behalf
- What will happen if the parent / carer are late to collect their child
- What will happen if the parent / carer fails to collect their child
- What will happen if the parent / carers are not considered able to offer safe care for their child (due to alcohol / drug misuse or mental health concerns)
- Circumstances where the school have been asked not to release the child at the end of the school day due to safeguarding concerns.

These areas are covered in our home school agreement, when asking parents to complete this at the start of their schooling at Bretherton.

Walking to school

The NSPCC provides guidance on children being left home alone as well as children being out alone. There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left

on their own. It is an offence, however, if to leave a child alone, places them at risk. Schools therefore have a continual obligation to monitor and alert relevant authorities if this is the case. This would, theoretically, include the journey to and from school.

The NSPCC advise the following;

- Children under 8 should not be outdoors for a considerable length of time unaccompanied
- Children under the age of around 12 years, should not be home alone for more than a very short period of time.

Schools are only responsible for the safety on the school journey where they have specifically arranged transport. If parents choose to let the child travel to / from school independently, then they need to assess the risks associated with the school route and the child's confidence, maturity and age. Guidance can be provided to parents from information via the NSPCC website. Parents should work with their child to build up their independence, while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. The most important consideration for a parent about the suitability of the child to travel to and from school alone is any risk to the child.

- If school is concerned by an aspect of the child travelling to and from school alone, we will first discuss it with parents and attempt to identify alternative options. Support can be offered to parents in the decision making process by considering the potential risks to children being left home alone and lone school travel arrangements by using the checklist for supervision of children before / after school in appendix 2.
- If an agreement can not be reached with the parent and the school feels that the child is being placed at potential significant risk, then the school will follow our child protection policy and procedures, informing the parents of this decision.
- If the school is in agreement for the child to make their own way home, the school will need to consider registration arrangements when the child leaves the building and schools should ask the parent to write a letter confirming the agreed arrangement, ensuring that it is reviewed regularly. It should be made clear to parents / carers that the responsibility for their child's safety rests with them.

Drop off and collection by older siblings

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person if it is not safe for the child to walk home unsupervised. There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child, however it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. This can include in the care of an older sibling if the level of supervision is 'likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (Children and Young Person Act, 1933). Therefore parents / carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that should go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

The suitability of a sibling caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case by case basis, by a judgement of potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting / being collected; the length and nature of the of the journey home, the behaviour and relationship of

the children collecting / being collected. Please see appendix 2 for a checklist for further factors to consider.

In line with many schools, at Bretherton Endowed CE Primary School, a siblings over the age of 14 may drop or collect a child, however notice to parents would acknowledge that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accident and the NSPCC recommend that no one under the age of 16 should be left to care for a younger child.

If schools becomes aware that parents are allowing an older sibling to look after a younger child, it is good practice to provide information to parents / carers to assist safe decision making about the arrangements as found in appendix 2 .

If parents have given permission for older siblings to collect / drop off younger children this will be recorded. If the school has any concern that older siblings are not competent to take younger siblings to and from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements; this will be raised with the parent and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral to children's services may be necessary.

Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection can be applied to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school. Safeguarding concerns are reported to the Designated CP lead, who will decide on the appropriate response.

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. The school governing body should ensure that as part of the service level agreement, the organisation has confirmed that:

- All staff have received appropriate safeguarding training
- A child protection policy is in place
- An appropriately trained designated member of staff is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns.

Factors that may compromise a parent/carer's ability to offer safe care

The use of drug / alcohol or the presence of mental health difficulties does not in itself necessarily mean that the parent / carers are uncaring, incompetent or unable to offer safe care to their children. However, if the extent of a parent's own needs means that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to children' services is required.

'Drugs' in this context refers to all drugs including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.

If an adult with parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggest they are unable to offer safe care, steps must be taken to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child.

The following factors should be considered:

1. Be mindful of staff safety and the safety of children in the building
2. Talk to the parent and ascertain if they appear safe to be able to offer safe care for their children. Consider the questions below:

- How is the adult presenting – are they staggering, speaking incoherently?
- Does the parent / carers needs compromise their ability to meet the needs of the child/ren's basic physical and emotional needs? If so, how?

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- How do they intend to get home / how did they arrive at school with the child? Is the parent driving?
- Is the parent / carer in sole charge of the child? Can the adult identify another parent or supportive adult to be with them and the child?

3. If concerned about the ability to care for the child based on the factors above, then a safeguarding referral to children's services is required.

4. The school should aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of Police and children's services. Schools do not have the authority to retain a child against a parent / carers will; therefore if this is not possible, then the school should consider ringing for a Police welfare check on the non-emergency number 101.

5. There may be occasions where an immediate emergency call needs to be made to the Police on 999. It may be judged that a child or another person (including staff) may be imminently at risk of serious danger. Examples include:

- Where an intoxicated parent is behaving violently or is threatening violence such that the belief is that the threats may be carried out thus compromising the immediate safety or care of a child, or;
- Place others in danger by driving a car whilst intoxicated with drugs or alcohol.

6. If ever unsure of how to proceed, contact should be made directly with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who will be able to offer advice on next steps.

Late Collection

Parents and carers share in the responsibility to work with staff to ensure their children are safe and in the care of a responsible adult. Parents should notify school immediately it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child may be late.

Our procedure in this instance would include:

- Checking for any information about changes to the normal collection routines
- Attempting to contact the parents / carers at home / work / mobile phone
- Attempting to telephone emergency contacts
- Keeping a record of incidents where parents / carers are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeat incidents. **(See appendix 3).**
- Sending a letter home to the parent / carer notifying them of the possible arrangements that may be put into place for their child if they continue to collect their child late and inviting parents in for a discussion about their circumstances if applicable. **(See appendix 3a).**

If a parent / carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility (including siblings, if appropriate and in line with school policy), whether there is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent / carer must put this in writing. In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent / carer must give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home.

This must be recorded and it is good practice to write to the parent / carer to confirm that this arrangement was made at their request and with their consent **(see appendix 3b)**. Where possible school will ask for the parent / carers to provide a password in these circumstances, known by the parent / carer and the collecting adult to check the identity of the person who is to collect the child. Concerns related to the child's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policy and procedures.

If the child/ren remain uncollected and no contact has been made with a parent / carer or emergency contact by 16:30 then we will progress to the actions in ‘Non Collection’.

Non Collection

If school is unable to make contact with a parent / carer or emergency contact by 16:30, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) should be contacted. The telephone number is listed in the school office or DSL as direct number. General social services number for Lancashire is: 01524 437606. A senior social worker will provide consultation in the form of advice and support in order to progress the situation.

If the decision is taken that the matter requires a child protection response, the school will be asked to complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). The MASH will accept a fully completed CAF in the first instance detailing any previous concerns. A MARF must then follow the CAF within 24 hours. If the situation is unresolved post 16:45 the out of hours service should be contacted with a view to establishing a plan of action. A notification will be made by the MASH to the out of hours service, however if MASH have not been previously informed, it will be the responsibility of the school to alert the out of hours service.

At the point of notification the MASH social worker or emergency duty social worker should be provided with the information held by the school regarding any current or previous child protection concerns and any previous incidents of not being collected from school. Consideration should also be made as to whether the child has any medical or additional needs which may better inform the advice and support from the social worker in how best to proceed.

Consideration will need to be made as to whether the school are able to continue caring for the child until social care can arrive or that a person known to the child and who understands the child’s needs is available.

Once the MASH social worker or emergency duty social worker has been advised of the situation, they may decide to carry out appropriate checks and make further attempts to contact the parent / carer. If there are concerns related to the welfare of the parent / carer, they will ask the local Police to visit the home address. If an appropriate parent / carer or emergency contact is located, they will be asked to ensure that the child collected from the school. If attempts to contact a parent / carer / emergency contact remain unsuccessful, the social worker / will make further decisions as to the safeguarding of the child.

The transportation of children

Headteachers and school governing bodies have determined that in transporting children, the following will be considered:

- Whether the school has parental consent to transport a child in the case of an emergency, including not being collected at the end of the school day.
- Whether staff are to transport children in their own vehicles and whether specific insurance is required for this purpose.
- Whether an approved taxi company is to be used.
- Staff should not transport children alone and therefore there should be a minimum of two staff present.
- What equipment is needed to transport a child? E.g. car seats etc

Pupils you are asked by the Police/Social Care not to leave the school premises

There may be circumstances when the school are asked not to allow children to go home with their parent / carer and in some situations, that parents are denied access to their child. This will most likely be due to a child protection issue where there is concern regarding the immediate

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safeguarding of a child. The school environment is a place of safety for a child who may be at risk of harm from a parent / carer.

School's first point of call for action will be to follow the school's safeguarding of children policy and Local Authority advice. If the school is asked by social care and / or Police to hold onto a child at the end of the school day you should confirm with the requester who will be coming to the school and when. It is advised that you obtain direct telephone numbers for person/s who are due to attend the school in order to remain in constant contact. It is reasonable to request Police presence when parents are informed that they cannot see their children. If the parent is uncooperative and staff feel the parent's behaviour or actions may place any child or staff member within the school at risk, then the Police should be called immediately on 999. This includes both verbal and physical abuse and threats of violence.

Adopted by the Governing Body of Bretherton Endowed CE Primary School

Adopted : March 2023

To be reviewed by the end of 2025

All aspects of our policy intends to comply within the Data Protection (GDPR) legislation.



Headteacher : Mrs Alison Moxham Chair of Governors : Mrs P Aspden www.brethertonschool.org.uk

Appendix 1

Check List for non collection at Sporting Events

- Contact numbers are always taken for day of event and staff will ring after 10 minutes of non collection. If possible second staff member will wait alongside child and staff member or if not possible another parent. If none of these possible, staff at location will be sought to stay and wait with them.
- If no response, staff will call HT or DHT to inform them and to seek additional telephone contact numbers. The DSL will take over decision making and at this stage may decide to contact safeguarding team and/ or chair of Governors.
- If no response, permission will be granted for staff member to transport the child back to school if safely and appropriate to do so.
- In an event, that it is not safe to transport and no further contact with parents has been possible, the HT , DHT or senior member of staff will travel to join the child and staff member.
- If the location is due to close, staff in convoy will transport the child back to school for safety and DSL will contact safeguarding or the Police for further instructions.
- If parents are incapacitated and are unable to collect but can receive the child at home, 2 members of staff will transport where possible. If unavailable, staff member will drive with child in rear of car in appropriate car safety (car seat) and child will speak to DSL on telephone throughout the journey.
- Children will not be transported home unless parents have been contacted and there is a suitable reason for non collection.
- In all events, the DSL will comply with the schools safeguarding of children policy.
- Other parents will not be given permission to transport the child home unless members of staff have spoke directly to parents and verbal agreement has been provided. On return to school, a follow up conversations will take place with parents to ascertain the cause of non collection, confirm child is at home and arrange for meeting at earliest convenience to discuss minimising this outcome in future and offer support.
- Staff at all times will act in a professional and calm way and will expect parents to do the same.
- Staff will not undertake any actions that they feel will put the child in any increased risk of danger or themselves and will receive support both at the time and after from the HT/ DHT if they encounter this event. They are expected to act in a way reasonable for their role and professional status.

Appendix 2

Checklist for supervision of children before / after school

The following factors should be considered when children are left unsupervised at home, walking to / from school or in the care of a sibling:

- ✓ Has the parent / carer considered the risk/s posed by leaving their child alone, walking to / from school or in the care of a sibling?
- ✓ How old is / are the child/ren
- ✓ How mature is / are the child/ren? What is their level of understanding / awareness about being unsupervised / walking to and from school?
- ✓ How comfortable is / are the child/ren with the arrangements (this includes the younger child and the older child who is acting as ‘carer’).
- ✓ Where will the children be left? Is this a safe place?
- ✓ How long, and how often, will the children be left?
- ✓ Is the home environment safe and secure? Has the parent / carer assessed the home environment / journey to or from school for risks? Has the older child or ‘carer’ been involved in the risk assessment?
- ✓ How far will the child/ren have to walk (if appropriate)?
- ✓ How far away will the parent / carer be? Will they be easily contactable?
- ✓ Do any of the children (this includes the older sibling or ‘carer’) have additional needs – medical, emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties / disabilities? How will these be met in the parent / carers absence?
- ✓ Does the child or sibling caring for another child know what to do in an emergency? Does the child know who they can contact in case of an emergency? Have instructions been left. e.g in the case of a fire?
- ✓ What are the expectations for the child/ren during this time? For example, are they expected to cook for themselves etc?
- ✓ Does the child have knowledge about how to keep themselves and younger siblings safe e.g. road safety, not answering the door to strangers, cooking etc?
- ✓ What is the level of acknowledge when it comes to first aid?
- ✓ How well do the siblings get on? How will tension be managed in the absence of a parent / carer?
- ✓ Are the children clear about rules and boundaries of what they can and can’t do while not in adult supervision? If looking after a younger sibling, do they have the confidence and authority to implement these rules consistently? What will they do if the younger children misbehave?

Appendix 3

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL

LOGO

Dear [Parent / carer]

As you are aware, [child] was collected late from school on [date]. I would like to remind you that in order to keep your child/ren safe, the school is obliged to implement its Late Collection procedure for children not collected on time.

If you are regularly late to collect your child, fail to collect your child [time] minutes after the school day, or fail to make suitable alternative collection arrangements this may lead to the school implementing the procedure for dealing with children not collected at the end of the school day or school activity. This will result in the Police and Children's Services being contacted in order to agree a plan of safety for your child.

Please do speak with either myself or your child's class teacher if you are currently experiencing difficulties in collecting your child, or if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 3a

Sample letter for use when alternative transport arrangements have been made with verbal consent only

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL LOGO

Dear [Parent / carer]

This letter is to document that as you were unable to collect [child] from school on [date], you gave your consent via telephone for [name of person] to collect your child in your absence.

This was noted at the time and this arrangement was carried out in order to keep your child/ren safe.

Please do speak with either myself or your child's class teacher if you are currently experiencing difficulties in collecting your child, or if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely,

xxxxxxx

3b Sample letter when a child is not collected from school

SCHOOL NAME
LOGO

SCHOOL

Dear [Parent / carer]

As you are aware, [child] was not collected from school at the end of the school day on [date] and we were unable to contact you or your named emergency contacts. The school were obligated to implement its Late / Non Collection procedure for children not collected / not collected on time at the end of the school or school activity.

This procedure has been agreed by the Barking and Dagenham Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and involved us contacting Children’s Services and the Police in order that arrangements could be made for your child to be taken to a place of safety. I am sure you appreciate the importance of providing for your child in these circumstances.

I hope that the reasons for your child not being collected are not serious, but would you please contact me as soon as possible to discuss this matter further. I would also advise that you contact Children Services on 020 8227 3811 for further information about the action taken.

Yours Sincerely,

Consent to transport the child in an emergency

SCHOOL NAME
LOGO

SCHOOL

Dear [Parent / carer]

As part of the [**delete as necessary** - induction process / review of our records], you are required to provide the following information so that the school may contact you regarding your child, ensure your child remains safe, and to use in the case of an emergency.

List:

Name of Child	First Language	Parents mobile number
Date of Birth	Special Dietary Needs	Medical Needs / Medication
Telephone Numbers	Religion	Parents place of work
Address	Ethnicity	Work number

In addition we require 2 emergency contacts:

Name / Relationship to child	Address	Telephone (Mobile/Home/Work)
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In addition, if for any reason you are unable to collect your child from school or if safeguarding concerns arise for your child, the school in consultation with Children’s Services and the Police may need to consider escorting your child/ren to a place of safety away from school premises. By providing these details and signing this form you are providing consent to the school escorting children whose needs must be managed away from the school premises in the event of an emergency.

Parent / carer signature _____

Yours Sincerely,

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Late / Non Collection Log

For use by the Designated Child Protection Lead every time a parent /carer is more than [time] minutes late to collect a child at the end of the school day / session / activity

This log should be held on the child's safeguarding file and audited for repeated patterns of late / non collection, which may indicate an underlying problem.

Date:	Class:
Name of Child:	Name of teacher:
Reason given for late / no collection:	

External agencies contacted? If so who?	Arrangements agreed:
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Follow up actions:

Outcome for the child:

Signature of Designated Child Protection Lead:
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