Houghton Primary School

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Protocol For Dealing With Children Not Collected From School At The End Of The School Day/Activity

Date reviewed and adopted:	September 2024
Reviewed and adopted by:	FGB
Signed: Chair of governors	Briony Rice
Signed: Headteacher	Andrew Spencer
Date of next review:	September 2026

Introduction

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Local Authorities and Schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A similar duty is placed on Independent Schools and Academies (Section 157). This duty should include making arrangements for dealing with children not collected at the end of a school day, or at the end of a school activity which is authorised by the school, and where the Governing Body or Proprietor retains responsibility for the use of school premises.

This protocol is an example of arrangements which have been agreed by Children's Social Care and the Police. It can be personalised by the school, and modified to meet local circumstances.

Parents will be made aware of the protocol, using the leaflet which should be sent out at the beginning of the school year, or admission of their child.

Houghton Primary School recognises that it has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, and that this duty extends to having arrangements in place for dealing with children who are not collected at the end of a school day, or at the end of an authorised activity.

The protocol will be brought to the attention of parents, in writing, when their child starts school.

On admission of their child to the school, parents should supply:

- names and full addresses of parents/carers (and confirmation of parental responsibility)
- home and work telephone numbers
- mobile phone numbers where appropriate
- TWO emergency contacts who may be called in the event of the parents/carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency

This information should be updated annually or whenever circumstances change.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the pupil is collected by a responsible person. The school must be notified immediately it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child may be late.

Houghton Primary School agrees to care for a pupil who has not been collected from school, until such a time as he/she has been collected by a parent/carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care, and/or the Police, in order to maintain the child's safety.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

In situations where the Head Teacher considers it appropriate, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put into place for their child. An example is shown in Appendix A.

Procedures

- If a child is not collected by a parent/carer after the school day or approved activity, the Headteacher or Designated Person will be notified. Every effort will then be made to contact the parent/carer, or failing that, the emergency contact.

- In the case of a pupil not being collected and no contact being made WITHIN 45 MINUTES OF THE USUAL COLLECTION TIME, the school will ring Cambridgeshire Direct Contact Centre/allocated Social Worker/Emergency Duty team to discuss the concerns and ask advice. This will allow the Social Care Unit/Team to be aware of the possibility that they may need to make arrangements for the alternative care of the child. For information which may need to be passed on, see Appendix B.

- The Cambridgeshire Contact Centre should be the first point of contact. The Head Teacher, Designated Person, (or other senior member of staff should these be unavailable), should ring **0345 045 5203** and request a discussion with the Duty Social Worker for Children's Services.

- Social Care will give advice and make appropriate checks. However school will continue to be responsible for trying to contact the parent/carer/emergency contact and to keep Social Care updated about the situation.

- If there are any concerns about the welfare of the parent/carer, Social Care may ask the local Police to visit the home address; please note that the Police cannot themselves provide a place of safety for a child(ren).

- If attempts to contact a parent/carer are still unsuccessful, school and Social Care will jointly take responsibility for arranging for children to be transported to the Social Care Unit/team, (or other appropriate venue) who will arrange a place of safety. This is considered to be a last resort and parent/carers should do their best to ensure that this is not necessary. Social Care will notify the school of the child's placement and provide contact details as appropriate. It will be the intention to return the child to the parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

- **It should be noted that Social Care offices close at 5.20 p.m. on Monday – Thursday, and at 4.25 p.m. on Friday. Schools should contact the Emergency Duty Team after these hours, on 01733 234724.**

- Plans for transporting a child will comply with local arrangements concerning insurance, staff availability out of hours and any relevant information from the school relating to the child's special needs or behavioural difficulties. All occasions when a child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation must be recorded and reported to a senior manager and the parents.

- During office hours, Cambridgeshire Direct will ensure that the relevant Social Care Unit/Team is alerted.

- Any call which results in action being taken by Social Care/Police should be followed up by a EHA or Referral Form to Children's Social Care according to advice given to the school staff.

Regularly Transported Children

- Where arrangements are in place for a child to be transported regularly from school in approved Education transport, the driver will wait for five minutes and then inform the school or Education Transport (or Social Care if the others are not contactable).

- If other children have to be taken home, the child will remain in the vehicle while this is done.

- The driver will leave a proforma (see Appendix C) at the child's address with the relevant contact details. Unless directed otherwise, the driver will attempt to deliver the child home once more. In the meantime, the school or Education Transport will liaise with Social Care via the Cambridgeshire Contact Centre, on 0345 045 5203, in the event that the parent/carer is still unobtainable.

Major Incidents

- If an incident occurs which results in a large number of children not being collected, Social Care will be contacted at the earliest opportunity, because it may be necessary to accommodate the children at a single location until appropriate arrangements can be made. If the nature of the incident is serious, it may be that the arrangements will form part of the Authority's emergency plan.

Appendix A

Dear _____ [Parent/Carer's name]

_____ [Child's name] was not collected from school on _____ day / date and we were unable to contact you or the emergency contact(s).

As a result, in order to safeguard the welfare of your child/ren, the school was obliged to implement the procedure for dealing with children not collected at the end of the school day or school activity.

This procedure, which has been agreed by Social Care, Education Transport and the Police, involved us contacting Social Care in order that arrangements could be made for your child to be taken to a safe place. I am sure that you will 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 ask you to contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher.

Appendix B

List of information which may be required by Contact Centre/Social Care in the event of a child being referred as not having been collected:

* **Child's details:**
  Name
  Date of birth
  Address
  Gender
  Ethnicity
  Religion
  First language
  Communication needs/SEN
  Behavioural needs
  Medical needs
  Dietary requirements

* **Brief outline of incident**

* **Name, role and contact details of referrer**

* **Parent/carer/emergency contact details:**
  name/address(es)/contact telephone numbers

* **Any current/previous child protection concerns**

* **Any previous incidents of child not being collected**

Appendix C

Dear Parent/Carer,

On _____ at ____ p.m. there was no response when we attempted to return your child(ren) home.

The driver will return to this address as soon as all the other children have been taken home.

Please ring Education Transport on 0345 045 5208, or the school, as soon as possible. If no-one is available when you call, please contact Social Care on 0345 045 5203

Yours faithfully,

_____ (driver) _____ (Contractor)

Appendix D

Procedures circulated to drivers/escorts by Education Transport

SEN and Primary School Transport

Procedure for Driver if parent not at home:-

1. Driver and one child on board – Driver to wait 5 minutes then ring School or Education Transport for instructions. (Passenger must not be left alone in vehicle)

2. Driver and more than one passenger on board – Driver to ring and advise School or Education Transport, then, unless otherwise instructed, deliver other children home and then return. If parent still not home, ring School or Education Transport again for instructions.

3. Driver, Passenger Assistant and one child on board – Driver to wait 5 minutes, ring School or Education Transport and unless instructed to wait further, before leaving, put completed Appendix C form through door, deleting sentence " the driver will return etc"

4. Driver, Passenger Assistant and more than one child on board – Driver to ring and advise School or Education Transport and unless otherwise instructed, complete Appendix C and put through door, continue journey to drop off other pupils and then return. If no one still at home, ring School or Education Transport again for further instructions.

If School or Education Transport are not available, driver to ring Social Care as advised on Appendix C. It is not the driver's responsibility to ring parents under these circumstances, School, Education Transport and/or Social Care have that responsibility and it is important that they are aware of the parent/carer not being at home.

Children must not be left at any other address unless specifically instructed to do so by Education Transport.

Operators should request that Education Transport confirm any verbal instructions in writing either by email or letter and the driver or passenger assistant should make a written note of any such verbal instructions if given to them directly and by whom.

Tel Numbers - Education Transport – 0345 045 5208
Social Care – 0345 045 5203
Emergency Duty Team – 01733 234724 – to be used only if no one else available, e.g. at weekends, early morning or late in evening.