Uncollected Child Policy

Academic year 2026/27 | Reviewed at least annually

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, children's safety and wellbeing are our highest priority.

If a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of their session, we will ensure that the child remains safe, appropriately supervised and reassured while we make every reasonable attempt to contact their parent/carer or another authorised adult.

A child will never be left alone or allowed to leave the setting with an unauthorised person.

Information Provided by Parents and Carers

When a child joins The Wendy House, parents/carers are required to provide appropriate contact and collection information.

This includes:

- parent/carer names and contact details;
- home address;
- emergency contact details;
- details of adults authorised to collect the child;
- the relationship of authorised adults to the child; and
- any other relevant collection information.

Parents/carers are responsible for informing us promptly if these details change.

We ask families to provide more than one emergency contact wherever possible.

Authorised Collection

Children will only be released into the care of individuals whom the parent/carer has authorised to collect them.

Parents/carers must inform The Wendy House if somebody different will be collecting their child.

Where necessary, staff will use our agreed password/security procedure to confirm the identity of the person collecting.

If staff are uncertain about the identity or authorisation of a person attempting to collect a child, the child will not be released until appropriate checks have been completed.

The safety of the child will take priority.

Parents Delayed in Collecting

Parents/carers are asked to contact The Wendy House as soon as possible if they know they will be late collecting their child.

Where possible, they should provide:

- the reason for the delay;
- their expected arrival time; and
- details of another authorised person who may collect the child if necessary.

Knowing that a parent/carer is delayed does not alter our responsibility to supervise and safeguard the child until they are safely collected.

Procedure When a Child Is Not Collected

If a child remains uncollected at the end of their session and we have not received an explanation, staff will begin our uncollected-child procedure.

First 10–15 Minutes

We will:

- reassure the child;
- check whether the parent/carer has contacted the setting;
- telephone the child's parent/carer;
- attempt any additional contact numbers held for the parent/carer; and
- contact authorised emergency contacts where necessary.

Repeated reasonable attempts will be made to contact an appropriate adult.

The child will remain safely supervised within the setting.

If Nobody Can Be Contacted

If we are unable to contact a parent/carer or authorised emergency contact, the Manager or senior member of staff will be informed.

The child will remain at The Wendy House with appropriate staff supervision.

Staff will not take the child home with them, transport the child to another address or leave the setting to visit the child's home.

The child will be reassured and cared for sensitively while the procedure continues.

After 30 Minutes

If 30 minutes have passed from the child's expected collection time and we have been unable to contact a parent/carer or authorised adult, the Manager/DSL or senior member of staff will contact the appropriate Milton Keynes children's social care/MASH service for advice.

We will follow the instructions provided by children's social care.

If there is an immediate safeguarding concern or emergency, or children's social care advises us to do so, the police may be contacted.

The child will remain safely supervised until appropriate arrangements have been made.

Safeguarding Concerns

Staff will consider whether the circumstances surrounding the failure to collect raise a safeguarding concern.

Factors may include:

- previous incidents of late or failed collection;
- inability to contact parents/carers;
- concerning information known about the family;
- the parent's presentation when they arrive;
- concerns regarding alcohol or substance misuse;
- domestic abuse concerns;
- existing involvement with children's social care; or
- anything else that may place the child at risk.

Where a safeguarding concern arises, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Safeguarding procedures may be initiated before 30 minutes have passed where there is reason to believe that a child or another person may be at risk.

Parent/Carer Arrives After Escalation

If the parent/carer arrives after children's social care or the police have been contacted, staff will explain that safeguarding procedures have already been initiated.

Where possible and appropriate, staff will update the agency involved and follow any instructions provided.

The child will only be released where staff are satisfied that it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Parent/Carer Appears Unable to Safely Care for the Child

If an authorised adult arrives but staff have reasonable grounds to believe they may be unable to care for the child safely, for example because they appear seriously intoxicated or impaired, staff will prioritise the child's safety.

The Manager/DSL or senior member of staff will be informed immediately.

Where appropriate, another authorised adult may be contacted.

If staff believe the child may be at risk of harm, advice will be sought from children's social care and/or the police in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

Staffing

A child who remains after the end of their normal session will continue to receive appropriate supervision.

Where reasonably possible, two members of staff will remain with the child while the uncollected-child procedure is followed.

Staff will not leave a child alone.

Recording the Incident

A written record will be made of an uncollected-child incident.

This will include, where appropriate:

- child's name;
- date;
- expected collection time;
- time the procedure began;
- attempts made to contact parents/carers;
- emergency contacts contacted;
- times of telephone calls;
- advice received from children's social care or police;
- time the child was eventually collected;
- identity of the person collecting;
- reason given for the late collection;
- staff present; and
- any further action required.

Records will be stored appropriately.

Repeated Late Collection

Where late collection occurs repeatedly, the Manager will discuss the matter with the parent/carer.

We will seek to understand whether there are difficulties affecting collection arrangements and consider whether additional support or alternative arrangements are appropriate.

Persistent late or failed collection may become a safeguarding concern and may result in further action.

Additional Charges

Depending on the circumstances, The Wendy House reserves the right to charge parents/carers for additional staffing costs resulting from repeated or significantly late collection.

Any charge will be applied in accordance with the setting's agreed fee arrangements.

Ofsted Notification

The Wendy House will consider whether an uncollected-child incident constitutes a significant event or safeguarding matter that must be notified to Ofsted.

Where notification is required, it will be made within the applicable statutory timescale.

Confidentiality

Information regarding an uncollected-child incident will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who have an appropriate need to know.

Where information needs to be shared to safeguard a child, safeguarding responsibilities will take priority over confidentiality.

Working With Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be made aware of our collection arrangements and their responsibility to:

- collect their child on time;
- tell us promptly if they are delayed;
- keep contact information up to date;
- provide appropriate emergency contacts;
- inform us who is authorised to collect their child; and
- follow our collection and password procedures.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where statutory guidance, safeguarding procedures, local contact arrangements or the needs of the setting change.

Policy Approval & Review

Policy year	2026/2027
Approval status	Awaiting Management Committee approval
Next scheduled review	March 2027