

## COLLECTIONS AND MISSING CHILD POLICY

### COLLECTION / NON COLLECTION OF CHILD

Parents/carers are asked to provide specific information on our Registration Form, including:

- Home address
- Landline telephone number
- Name and mobile telephone numbers for both parents/carers (birth certificate must be seen to confirm details of parental responsibility)
- Other emergency contact name and contact number x 2
- A password for collection procedures
- Names of any other person(s) authorised to collect the child with the password

Parents/carers tend to collect their child regularly, which enables staff to build good relationships with them, and recognise the familiar faces on collection. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform us if they have a temporary number or will not be contactable. In this case, the second named authorised person would be contacted.

#### Late Collection

Parents/carers are informed to contact us if they will be, or possibly may be, running late to collect their child. They will be invoiced for the additional care cost. Failure to contact us or repetitive late collections will result in a Late Collection Charge in accordance with our Payment Policy. We will speak to the child and provide our normal care, to avoid or limit any distress for them.

#### Non-collection

If a child is not collected at the end of a session, we will contact parent/carers, then emergency contacts if need be. This usually resolves the issue, but we understand there may be times that it does not. In this situation, after a grace of 30 minutes, we would follow our Child Protection procedure as follows:

- The child remains on the premises with two members of staff (at least one must be first aid qualified and at least one must hold a Level 3 qualification)
- The leading member of staff on duty will telephone Social Services and follow their advice. Ofsted may also need to be contacted
- A report is written and signed by the members of staff concerned, and filed
- Social Services will aim to find the parent/carer. If they fail to do so, the child will become Looked After by the Local Authority. Under no circumstances should staff attempt to find a parent/carer, nor should they remove the child from the premises e.g. take them to their home address, unless advised to do so by Social Services

#### Unknown person collecting

On occasions when parents/carers or authorised persons are unable to collect their child, the parent/carer should inform us ahead of collection time, giving us the name of the person who will be collecting. We may also ask for a description of the person. We will remind the parent/carer that the collecting person will need to know the password we have registered for the child. On collection, if the details do not tally, the child will stay with us until a satisfactory conclusion is reached. This may include ID checks and/or telephoning the parent. If an acceptable outcome is not reached, we will apply our Child Protection procedure for non-collection as above.

### MISSING CHILD

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off the premises, and every attempt is made to ensure the security of children at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our procedures are detailed below.

#### If a child goes missing in setting:

- A staff member will alert Management immediately
- The Manager on duty (or next senior staff member available) will carry out a thorough search of the building, garden and school grounds. They **MUST** take a mobile phone
- All staff and the school will be made aware of the situation
- A headcount will be taken to ensure all other children are accounted for
- All exits (doors, gates and windows) are checked for any breach of security which could have resulted in the child wandering out, or being removed
- To ensure the children do not panic, and to ease the search, staff should contain them to one room and provide a calming activity
- If the child is found injured, we would revert to usual first aid procedures (see First Aid, Accidents, Injuries, Illness and Medicine Policy)
- If the child refuses to return to setting and a Physical Intervention is not appropriate, the member of staff will stay with the child. The parent/carer is contacted immediately
- If the child is not found within 10 minutes, the missing child is reported to the police (call 999) and the parent/carer is contacted
- In all possible outcomes, Management will investigate the incident, taking statements from all staff members on duty and any other witnesses, to attempt to identify what happened. The incident may be reported to Ofsted.

If a child goes missing outside of the setting / on an outing:

(This may be different when a parent/carer is attending an outing as they are responsible for their own child)

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff will ask children to stand with their designated person (staff or parent/carer) whilst they carry out a headcount to ensure that all other children are accounted for
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity
- Staff will keep calm and engage the remaining children and parents/carers in an activity to limit any distress
- Staff contact the venue manager and/or security who will hopefully assist with the search and contact the police if the child is not found within 10 minutes
- Where the venue manager and/or security are unreachable, staff contact the police (call 999) to report the missing child if he/she is not found within 10 minutes
- The parent/carer is contacted if they are not already present
- Management or the next senior member of staff available is informed. If she is not on the outing, she will make her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting where appropriate
- In all possible outcomes, Management will investigate the incident, taking statements from all staff, parents/carers and any other witnesses, to attempt to identify what happened. The incident may be reported to Ofsted.

Managing people during / after the incident

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Staff and management will attempt to ensure everyone is kept as calm as possible
- We understand that staff will be extremely worried, especially the Keyperson or designated carer of the child, who may blame themselves for the incident. We would expect their feelings of anxiety and distress to rise as the length of time the child is missing increases, and would do our best to reassure and calm them
- Staff may be the target of parental anger and feel vulnerable or threatened. Management need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive appropriate support
- We understand parents/carers, family members, witnesses or staff members may feel angry. They may want to apportion blame by singling out one staff member over the others, or they may direct their anger at Management. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent/carer, there should always be a minimum of two members of staff present, ideally one of which should be Management
- No matter how understandable a parent/carer's anger may be, aggression and threats towards staff or Management are not tolerated, and we may contact the Police should the need arise
- Other children will be sensitive and worried about what is going on, during and after the incident. The remaining staff will need to focus on the children's needs and refrain from discussing the incident in front of them. They should answer any children's questions appropriately; with honesty but also constant reassurance
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support
- Staff will not discuss the incident with anybody outside the setting without taking advice (in accordance with confidentiality procedures) and only a Manager is authorised to deal with local press if deemed necessary.

Investigation

- A Director(s) speaks with the parent/carers concerned
- A Director(s) carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the / other witnesses present at the time
- Statements will detail:
  - The date and time of the statement
  - Staff and children present in the group/outing and the member of staff designated to the missing child if relevant
  - When the child was last seen in the group/outing
  - The circumstances of the incident including anything that may have triggered the disappearance (e.g. a disagreement), how long the child was / has been missing, where / what time they were last seen, what happened following etc.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff are expected to co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident may be reported under RIDDOR. The local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case of prosecution.
- OFSTED is informed of the incident and the outcome in writing.
- The Insurance provider is also informed.
- Any relevant risk assessments will be re-evaluated as necessary.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Clocktower Childcare Ltd held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Latest date to be reviewed: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

Signed on behalf of Clocktower Childcare Ltd:

*J. Law*

*S. Wingham*

*L. Baverstock*

Jane Law, Director

Sally Wingham, Director

Lara-Jane Baverstock, Director