

Guidance on safe drop off/  
collection of children from school  
Beech Hyde Primary School  
and Nursery



## Information required from parents/carers at admission

When a child begins at the school, parents/carers must supply key information such as:

- Names and full addresses of parents/carers (including confirmation of parental responsibility/ private fostering arrangements\* and copies of any legal orders)
- Information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child (and copies of any relevant legal orders etc)
- Home address
- Telephone numbers (home, mobile, work) where appropriate
- At least one emergency contact who may be called in the event of the parents/carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency

This information will be kept on the schools secure database and can be accessed by all staff. Parents/carers must inform the school as soon as there are any changes to this information. Parents/carers will be asked to check the data held annually.

*\*Private Fostering is an informal arrangement where a person looks after somebody else's child under the age of 16 years (or 18 years if the child has disabilities) for more than 28 days, when they themselves are not a close relative (grandparent, sibling over 18, aunt/uncle) of the child and do not have parental responsibility for the child. A placement may have been arranged by the child themselves or by a parent but not by the Local Authority. The birth parents retain full parental responsibility for the child and for the making of all decisions in respect of the child. All such arrangements must be assessed by the local authority and the school will refer to Children's Services if they believe such an unassessed arrangement is in place.*

## Supervision before and after school

When a child starts at the school, parents/carers will be given information on the school day and routines, as well as expectations around punctuality of drop off and collection of children.

School staff are responsible for the children during school opening hours, but they have other commitments once their teaching day has finished. Gates at the back and front of the school will open at 8.45am for morning drop off and open again at 3.10pm for afternoon collection at 3.15pm/3.20pm. Parents/carers should ensure they are present at school to collect their child on time.

## Drop off and collection of children

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

In line with guidance from the NSPCC and our own safeguarding risk assessment, children in Nursery and Years Reception – Year 5 should be dropped off at school and collected by an adult (over 16).

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, 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.

Schools are only responsible for safety on the school journey where they have specifically arranged transport **(see below)**.

Year 6 pupils may walk to and from school unaccompanied with written permission from their parents/carer. This is because at 10/11 years old they will have attained the maturity to cope with such a responsibility and may be a good way of developing independence in the year before they attend secondary school.

If parents choose to let their child travel to/from school independently, then they should assess the risks associated with the school route and their own child's confidence. Parents should work with their children to build up their independence, while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills

and general awareness. The most important factor to consider about suitability of a child walking to/from school alone is any **risk to the child - checklist for supervision of children before/after school** (below). Once the child has left the school site, the responsibility for the child's safety rests with the parent/carer.

### **Drop off and collection by older siblings**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person over 16. 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 Persons Act, 1933*). Therefore parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that should go wrong in their absence, and this includes the school journey. 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 the potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected; the length and nature of the journey home, the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the NSPCC recommend that no one under 16 should be left to care for a younger child.

If parents/carers are allowing older siblings to collect /drop off younger children this will be recorded as a potential safeguarding issue and raised with the parent/carer.

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/carer and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services where necessary.

### **Checklist for supervision of children before/after school**

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

- Have you 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 or 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 child/ren 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 this 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 also includes the older sibling or 'carer') have additional needs – medical, emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties/disabilities? How will these needs be met in the parent/carer's 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 case of a fire?
- What are the expectations of the child/ren during this time? i.e. 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 knowledge when it comes to first aid?
- How well do the siblings get on? How will tension be managed in the absence of the parent/carer?
- Are the children clear about rules and boundaries of what they can and can't do while parents/carers are out? If they are 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?

- 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 this risk assessment?

### **Extra-curricular activities**

The same procedures for drop off and collection apply to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school. Safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL, 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:

- level one safeguarding children training has been completed by staff
- a child protection policy is in place
- an appropriately trained designated member of staff is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns.

### **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. It must be made clear to parents that the school must be notified immediately it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child may be late. Each school should have their own internal procedures for late collection, which all staff (including those in charge of after school activities) should be familiar with to ensure the situation can be resolved as quickly as possible to cause as little distress as possible to the child.

Such procedures may 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 repeated incidents.
- 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.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility whether this 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. Concerns about 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

### **Non collection**

Parents/carers will be informed that in the event that their child is not collected from the setting by an authorised adult and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures, i.e. Police will be informed and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made.

Once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain whether there is anything that the school could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation. It may be necessary to discuss with the parent steps that they could take to avoid recurrence e.g. ensuring that the school has current contact details etc. It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure that they worked smoothly and if necessary to amend for future incidents.

## Regularly transported children

Regularly transported children in this context refers to children who have a statutory entitlement of free home to school transport from the Local Authority. This includes:

- children who have been placed in a school that is not within the statutory walking distance (2 miles for pupils under 8, and 3 miles for those aged 8 plus)
- children who have been placed in a school where there is no safe walking route
- children from 'low income' families\* if they are aged 8-11 and live more than 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school
- children with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) who have a statement which has transport requirements written into it.

\*those who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents receive the maximum Working Tax Credit

The responsibility of parent/carer is to ensure that their child is ready for collection at the designated time as notified by the LEA or operator and that there is a suitable person to receive their child at the end of the school day.

## Legislation

Children's Act 2004

Children's Act 1989

Children and Young Person Act 1933 Education Act 2002

[www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child\\_protection/policy/legislation.shtml](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/legislation.shtml) Occupier's Liability Acts 1957 and 1984

All available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

## Guidance

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures

<http://www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk/>

The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) agrees how the relevant organisations in Hertfordshire will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and ensure effectiveness. The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection procedures set out the arrangements for all agencies to work together to safeguard children. A key objective for the HSCB is to support parents and carers to provide a safe and stable family life for children and young people. It also supports organisations that provide services to reduce the likelihood of children and young people suffering accidental injury and death, bullying and discrimination, crime and anti-social behaviour. The Designated Senior Person, Head teacher and Governing Body are required to be familiar with these Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection procedures.

## Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People in Hertfordshire

[http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child\\_protection/policy/local.shtml#needs](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/local.shtml#needs)

**The Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire** handbook sets out clear thresholds for accessing targeted and specialist services. It will support practitioners in making decisions on how best to respond to the needs of children and families.

It is expected that all agencies in the county will work to the thresholds as set out in this handbook. It is therefore important that the children's workforce in Hertfordshire have a clear understanding of the threshold guidance in their work with children and families, and that it is consistently used across the county.

The handbook includes a new, more simplified, 'Continuum of Needs' windscreen and a clearer indication of the different levels and indicators for universal, targeted and specialist needs. The handbook is designed to only to be a guide and is not intended to replace professional judgement in any situation.

## **Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES 2007**

[http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child\\_protection/policy/national.shtml](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/national.shtml)

This document sets out the responsibilities of all local authorities, schools and further education (FE) institutions in England to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It sets out recruitment best practice, some underpinned by legislation, for the school, local authority, and FE sectors

Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF 2010

[http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child\\_protection/policy/national.shtml](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/national.shtml)

Working Together sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. Part 1 of the document is issued as statutory guidance.

Research

***“Please keep an eye on your younger sister”*: sibling supervision and young children's risk of unintentional injury**, Morrongiello, Shell and Schmidt, Injury Prevention, August 2010

<http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/16/6/398.abstract>

Parental supervision reduces young children's risk of unintentional injuries, but supervision by older siblings has been shown to increase risk. The current study explored how this differential risk of injury may arise.

### **Guidance /resources and websites by other organisations**

HCC cannot accept any liability for the content of those listed under this heading and any questions or queries about these should be raised directly with the organisation responsible.

### **Is it legal? A families' guide to the law , Family and Parenting Institute**

[http://www.familyandparenting.org/Resources/FPI/Documents/Is%20it%20legal\\_%20guide%20Accessible%20.pdf](http://www.familyandparenting.org/Resources/FPI/Documents/Is%20it%20legal_%20guide%20Accessible%20.pdf)

The laws affecting children and families are numerous and can be confusing. Myths about what age a child can be left alone are common. Yet it is essential for families and for those who work with families to understand the legal framework; to know the basics about childcare, parents' and partners' rights and children in trouble. This edition offers clarification of the law for families and all those who work with them. It includes a fully updated helpfile, a full list of sources of further information on all the main areas affecting families.

### **NSPCC Home alone: your guide to keeping your child safe**

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/home\\_alone\\_wda73922.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/home_alone_wda73922.html)

There is no legal age at which children may be left home alone, but parents can be prosecuted for neglect if it puts them at risk of injury or suffering. This leaflet gives sound professional advice and useful tips to help parents decide in what situations they may leave their children home alone, and what they need to do to ensure their safety and wellbeing. It also advises how to make sure children can safely use the internet. It explains the risks of leaving babies and younger children unattended, and provides helpful advice on what qualities and experience to look for when choosing a babysitter or child-minder. A useful resource for any service or professional offering parenting advice to new parents and those caring for young children or teenagers

### **NSPCC Out alone: your guide to keeping your child safe**

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/outalone\\_wda65316.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/outalone_wda65316.html)

Getting the balance right between allowing children their independence and ensuring their safety when away from home can be difficult. Out alone provides professional advice and practical tips to parents on how to prepare children for being out on their own, whether it's when walking to and from school, attending sports or holiday clubs, or getting involved in other community activities. It explains the importance of telling children from a very young age what to do if they get lost, and the dangers of allowing pre-teen children to go out on their own. It also gives advice on what anyone should do when noticing a child being bullied, ill-treated or in distress. A useful resource for any service or professional offering parenting advice to those caring for young children or teenagers.

### **Living Streets: Walk to School Campaign**

<http://www.walktoschool.org.uk/get-involved/parents/faqs/>

Walk to School is a campaign run by national charity Living Streets. The campaign encourages primary school children and their parents to leave the car at home and walk to school. The weblink contains a list of issues frequently faced by parents around walking to school.

Family Lives: Walk to School

<http://familylives.org.uk/free-resources/multimedia/walking-school>

Visit Family Lives (previously Parentline Plus) and take part in an interactive e-learning module produced in partnership with Living Streets, all about walking to school.

### **HertSpeak [www.corekids.org](http://www.corekids.org)**

HertSpeak is a service funded by Comic Relief specifically for children, parents and families where problematic parental alcohol use may be an issue. HertsSpeak aim to work in a family focused way to help children be safe and healthy, adults to be effective parents, and families to communicate. They offer the family emotional and practical support to build upon existing parenting skills and relationships.

HertSpeak can support:

- Parents with current or past alcohol use issues
- Children who have been affected by parental alcohol use
- Anyone with a caring role for a child affected by parental alcohol use

### **The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents**

<http://www.rospa.com/childsafety/inthelife/>

Advice, information and resources for safety practitioners, parents, teachers and other professionals who work with children about child safety on the road, in the home and at play.

### **NSPCC**

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>