



Drop off and Collection Policy

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools and FE colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In addition, those bodies must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in considering what arrangements they need to make for the purpose of that section.

Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 – require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES 2007 DfES 2007 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF 2010

Safeguarding arrangements should include consideration of the procedures for dealing with children who are late to be collected or are not collected at the end of a school day/ authorised school activity and where the Governing Body or Proprietor retains responsibility for the use of school premises. It also applies where staff have concerns about effective care by the person collecting the child and the impact of this on the child's safety outside of school, in line with *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES 2007 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF 2010*.

Other legislation relevant to this guidance:

Children Act 2004
Children Act 1989
Children and Young Persons Act 1933
Occupiers liability Acts 1957 and 1984
(Links to these documents can be found in Appendix 4)

Parents new to St Nicholas

When a child starts at St Nicholas Catholic Primary 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 have other commitments once their teaching day has finished.

When starting at St Nicholas parents/carers should supply the following key information:

- ☞ 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 and telephone number/s
- ☞ Place of work and work telephone number/s

📞 Mobile phone numbers

📞 Emergency contacts who may be called in the event of the parents/carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency

It is a parent's responsibility to inform school if any of their information/ phone numbers etc. change.

Supervision before and after school

Children walking to and from school alone

"There is no law prohibiting children from being out on their own at any age. It is a matter of judgement for parents to decide when children can play out on their own, walk to the shops or school".

Is it Legal? A parent's guide to the law' by the Family and Parenting Institute (June 2011)

Children walking to and from school 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, 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.**

"(1) Cruelty to persons under sixteen

If any person who has attained the age of sixteen years and [has responsibility for] any child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health (including injury to or loss of sight, or hearing, or limb, or organ of the body, and any mental derangement), that person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall be liable...."

Section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933

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

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**. Good practice would be to have a discussion with parents about the school's view and identify alternative options if necessary, e.g. another parent taking the child home. St Nicholas can support parents in decision making and consideration of risk about children being home alone and school transport arrangements by using the **checklist for supervision of children before/after school** (below).

If the school is in agreement for the child to make their own way home, **parents must write a letter to confirm the procedure; ensuring that this is reviewed regularly. The responsibility for their child's safety rests with them.**

Supervision on school site

The school playground gate is open from 8:30am, school staff are only present from 8:45am, before then there will be nobody to supervise the children and therefore the welfare of the children is parent's responsibility.

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 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 Persons 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 judgment 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.

It is the policy of St Nicholas that only siblings over the age of 16 to drop off or collect a child. This is based on a recommendation by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the NSPCC.

If parents have given permission for older siblings to collect /drop off younger children this should 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 if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services where necessary.

Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection are applied to extended school activities such as football, choir, where the activity is provided by the school.

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 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?

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

If the extent of a parent's own needs mean that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services is required. (ie The use of drugs/alcohol or the presence of mental health difficulties)

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

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 must make school aware immediately if it becomes apparent that the person collecting the child may be late.

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 this is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent/carer must put this in writing and they must be on the office contact sheet.

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.

Concerns about the child's safety and welfare associated with late collection should be dealt with in line with the school's child protection policy and procedures.

Non-Collection

Parents should be informed that in the event that their child is not collected from the school 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.

Appendix 1a Sample letter for use when a child is collected late from school

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 after xxx minutes, or fail to make suitable alternative collection arrangements this may lead to school contacting Police and Children's Services.

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

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXXXX

Appendix 2 Sample letter for use when child is not collected from school

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL LOGO

Dear [Parent/Carer],

[Child's name] was not collected from school on [day / date] and we were unable to contact you or the emergency contact(s). In circumstances where children are not collected at the end of the school day or school activity, the school is obliged to work within local procedures for keeping children safe and this resulted in the school contacting Children's Services and Police.

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,

Appendix 3 Late Collection Log

The late collection log is kept in the school office as a record.

