



ALEXANDRA COLLEGE DUBLIN

Alexandra College Preschool: Dropping Off and Collection of Children

(includes General Collection Policy)

Document Title:	Dropping off and Collection of Children (includes General Collection Policy)
Unique Reference Number:	002
Document Author:	Alexandra College Junior School, CB
Document Approved:	Avril Lamplugh
Person(s) responsible for developing, distributing and reviewing Policy	Avril Lamplugh
Person responsible for approving Policy	Board of Management
Method of communication of policies to staff (email / hard copy / induction training)	Email
Method of communication of policies to parents/guardians (full policies via email, hard copy)	Email
Method of communication of policies to Children in the Service	A Hard Copy Child Friendly Version of this policy is available in the Service
Date the Document is Effective From:	March 2023
Scheduled Review Date:	March 2025
Number of Pages:	8

This policy is developed in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 [Early Years Services] [Registration of School Age Services] Regulations 2018.

This policy is available and communicated to parents, guardians, staff and relevant stakeholders.

It is also available in child friendly format to school age children in the Service

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy. Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

Statement of Intent:

The well-being, safety and security of all the children in the setting is our main concern. The following procedure has been drawn up to ensure that this is maintained at all times, that an accurate record is kept of all children in the Service including absences, arrival and departure and that all children leave the premises with either their main carers or the adults who are authorised to do so.

Before any child starts the Service the parent/carer is required to provide the names and contact details of all people authorised to collect their child on their registration form. If the named person/s cannot collect the child they are responsible for, the parent /carer must inform staff of the person, who will be collecting the child and give consent by phone where possible, with a clear description and contact details including address and telephone number of the responsible person.

If possible, we would like to meet the person collecting in advance, enabling the staff to feel confident about the child leaving safely and happily.

On no account will a child be allowed to leave the premises with an unauthorised person. Any deviation made by any staff member will be considered as gross misconduct and will be dealt with appropriately.

All children arriving at or being collected from the Service must be signed in and out by either a member of staff or a parent/guardian or their nominated person. Please see our policy on Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance.

Note:

All children are supervised during collection times, and when entering and leaving the service.

Transport arranged by parents/guardians:

Where parents/guardians make their own independent arrangements for their children to be collected from school by car or bus and brought to the service, the safety of the child is a matter for the parents/guardians. The Service is not liable for any loss, damage claims or demands as a result of children travelling in transport so organised.

Collection of Children by Parents/Guardians or Nominated Persons from the Service:

- For their own safety it is the policy of the service that no children will be permitted, under any circumstances, to leave the Service unaccompanied, unless special permission has been sought and given.
- Children must be collected by a parent/guardian or their nominated person.
- Parents/guardians or their nominated person are responsible for their children during collection at the service and must accompany the child off service premises.
- A member of staff, a parent or guardian or their nominated person will sign out each child on collection.
- Parents/guardians must collect their child by the agreed collection time. Parents/guardians will be asked to give the names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child. If the parent is late arriving to collect the child, the person in charge will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent, the person in charge will contact the other named persons to collect the child.
- Children will not be released into the care of a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child. Should this situation arise the staff will contact an authorised collector. If no one is available to collect the child, then the person in charge should contact the TUSLA social work child protection team. In the event of a parent collecting another child a prior arrangement must be made.

Children of school-going age arriving at or leaving the service unaccompanied:

It is the policy of the service that no minor child may arrive at or leave the service unaccompanied. Where a parent/guardian requires that their minor child(ren) may arrive at or leave the service premises unaccompanied the service requires that such parent or guardian authorises this in writing.

Note: Where a parent so instructs the service, a parent does so at their own risk and the risk of the child. The Service has no responsibility for and owes no duty of care to such child, parents/guardians before the child's arrival at the service premises and immediately the child has exited the Service's premises.

Such instruction will only be accepted by the Service from the parent or guardian of a child(ren) and not from a nominated person.

Please see Appendix A Parental Authority form for a child to arrive at or leave the service unaccompanied.

Attempted collection by a person who is not on the child's records:

Children should be collected only by the adult/s named on the 'Collection Authorisation'.

If the parent has not been personally contacted to authorise the collection of their child, the child will not be permitted to leave the premises until an authorised collector, as recorded in the child's record is available.

Late Collection of Children:

We understand that sometimes a parent is unavoidably delayed when coming to collect their child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. Parents/guardians in this situation must contact the Manager to say that they will be late and arrange with staff what to do. Children are only released from the service to individuals named by the parent.

We reserve the right to charge a late collection fee for persistent lateness in collection of children. Our fee is €7.50 per hour.

Early Collection of Children:

We ask that parents/guardians to let us know if they or their nominated person will be picking up their child early so that we can have the child ready and minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

Where a child is not collected:

In the event that a child is not collected from the service after the expiration of 10 minutes after the appointed time, the Management will contact the parents/guardians by telephone to ascertain when they will be arriving at the Service to pick up their child. Management will then make arrangements with the parent in relation to collection. Please note that a late collection fee of €7.50 per hour applies.

In the event that Management is unable to contact the parents/guardians by telephone, a text message will be sent to the parent or guardian. If no response is received to this text message within 5 (five) minutes Management will contact the parent/guardian's emergency collection person identified to the Service to make arrangements for the emergency person to collect the child from the Service.

Where Management are unable to make contact with parents/guardians or the specified emergency person after the expiration of two hours after the appointed collection time, if there is no contact from parents/guardians or emergency person the Management will notify Tusla and An Garda Síochána of the position in case an emergency has arisen.

Separated and Divorced Parents:

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this.

- We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a court order is in place. However, we reserve the right to seek clarification of identity when one parent has not had any contact with the service, or the contract has been with one parent only and a second parent makes unexpected contact. This is usually in circumstances where a separation is happening.
- We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
- Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask parents to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there are any legal documents i.e. custody order, barring order we would ask parents to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

Attempted collection by a parent who has been denied access in a court order:

- A parent who has been denied access to a child through a court order will not be permitted on to the premises
- If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the service, this will be viewed as trespassing. The service will in this event contact the Local Garda.

By law, an unmarried mother is the automatic guardian of a child born outside of marriage. In some circumstances, unmarried fathers have automatic access. The service should be informed about access rights. Unmarried fathers will automatically become guardians of their children if they meet a cohabitation requirement. An unmarried father who cohabits for 12 months with the child's mother, including 3 months following a child's birth, will automatically become the child's guardian. This provision is not retrospective, so guardianship will only be acquired automatically where the parents live together for at least 12 months after 18 January 2016.

If a parent/guardian or the nominated person arrives in an unfit state:

Parents/guardians/nominated Persons should be in a fit state to collect their children. If a parent/guardian/nominated person arrives in an 'unfit' state, for example under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the senior member of staff on duty will contact the other parent or nominated person as listed on the child's registration form (depending on authorisations and circumstances) or will contact the duty social worker or the Gardaí. The child's welfare and safety will always come first.

Informing the Service if a child is not attending.

If a child has not attended school due to appointment, illness etc. the service should be informed. This policy also applies to un-notified changes of collection times. This should also apply in any event whereby the child does not need to be collected from school. Failure to do so can waste valuable time and causes undue concern for staff collecting the child from their school.

- It is the responsibility of the parent to make the necessary arrangements to get the child/children to the service and to inform the person in charge in writing of these arrangements.
- It is also the parents' responsibility to comply with the Service's policy which prohibits children arriving unaccompanied to the Service.

Note: Records of all Collections are kept for two years from the time ceases attending the service.

Reviewed: **May 2023**

Next Review Date: **May 2025**

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Avril Langley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light green rectangular box.

Junior School Head