



Late Collection and Non-Collection of Children Policy

Cherish Childcare operates morning, afternoon and full-day sessions. Parents and carers may collect their child earlier than the end of their booked session; however, children must be collected no later than the agreed session finish time. Full fees remain payable for the booked session.

We recognise that unexpected delays can occur. This policy sets out the steps parents, carers and staff must follow where a child is collected late or is not collected, so that the child remains safe, cared for and reassured at all times.

Authorised collection arrangements

Parents and carers must provide the nursery with up-to-date emergency contact information and details of authorised people who may collect their child when they are unable to do so themselves.

- Parents and carers should provide at least two emergency contacts wherever possible.
- Anyone nominated as a designated collector should normally be an adult aged 18 or over.
- Parents and carers must tell the nursery in advance when someone different will be collecting their child.
- A safety password agreed with the nursery must be used when an authorised person who is not known to staff is collecting the child.
- Where the designated collector is not known to nursery staff, the parent or carer should provide enough information for staff to identify the person safely before the child is released.
- The child will only be released when staff are satisfied that the person collecting is authorised to do so. If staff are not satisfied, the child will remain in the nursery's care while further checks are made.

If a parent or carer expects to be late

- Telephone the nursery as soon as possible to explain the situation and give an expected arrival time.
- Arrange for an authorised designated adult to collect the child wherever possible.
- Tell the nursery who will be collecting so that staff can prepare and reassure the child where appropriate.
- If collection arrangements change again, contact the nursery immediately. Staff will not rely solely on a message from an unknown person to change a child's collection arrangements.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
1 September 2026	Cherish Childcare	1 September 2027



Late collection and non-collection procedure

If a child has not been collected by the end of their booked session and the nursery has received no communication, staff will allow a short five-minute grace period before beginning the following procedure. Where there is an immediate safeguarding or welfare concern, management may escalate the response sooner.

Step 1 – Initial checks and contact

- The manager or most senior member of staff on duty will be informed that the child has not been collected.
- Staff will check the child's records for any known change to collection arrangements, family circumstances or other relevant information.
- The parent or carer will be contacted using the telephone numbers held by the nursery. If they cannot be reached, staff will contact the child's other parent/carers where applicable and then work through the emergency contacts.

Step 2 – Continued attempts to make contact

- If contact is not established, available contact numbers will continue to be tried at approximately 10-minute intervals.
- All attempts to contact parents, carers and emergency contacts, together with the times and any responses received, will be recorded.
- If the child remains at the nursery beyond normal operating hours, the manager or senior member of staff and one other member of staff will remain with the child. During normal operating hours, appropriate staffing arrangements and ratios will continue to be maintained.

Step 3 – Safeguarding escalation

- If no suitable adult can be contacted and the child remains uncollected for one hour, the manager or person in charge will contact Hackney MASH for advice and follow the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- The one-hour point does not prevent earlier contact with MASH or the police where the child's circumstances, known vulnerabilities or other information give rise to an immediate safeguarding concern.
- If there is reason to believe that the child, parent or carer may be at immediate risk, the police may be contacted.
- The child will never be left alone, taken from the premises by a member of staff without appropriate authority, or released to an unauthorised person.

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Supporting the child

Throughout any late collection or non-collection situation, the child's welfare is the priority. Staff will remain calm, provide reassurance, meet the child's care needs and offer appropriate activities or comfort to minimise distress. Staff will avoid discussing potentially worrying information in front of the child.

Recording and follow-up

- A written record will be made of significant late collection or non-collection incidents, including contact attempts, decisions made, advice received and the eventual collection arrangements.
- Repeated late collection will be discussed with the parent or carer and may be considered alongside any wider welfare or safeguarding concerns.
- Ofsted will not be notified simply because a child has been collected late or was initially uncollected. Ofsted will be notified only where the circumstances meet a relevant statutory notification requirement.

Late collection charges

Any late collection charges that apply are communicated separately through the nursery's fees, terms or parent agreement. A charge does not make late collection acceptable and does not replace the expectation that children are collected promptly at the end of their booked session.

Links with safeguarding

Where non-collection, repeated lateness, difficulties contacting a family or information received during the incident raises a safeguarding concern, staff must immediately share this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or manager and follow Cherish Childcare's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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