

# Innsworth Preschool Late Collection and Uncollected Child Policy

Last Updated: 1st January 2026

## 1. Purpose and Scope

**1.1 Overview:** This policy defines the responsibilities of parents/carers regarding the timely collection of children and outlines the clear, sequential procedures followed when a child is collected late or remains uncollected.

**1.2 Priority:** The safety, well-being, and legal protection of children and staff are our highest priority.

## 2. Legal and Statutory Framework

**2.1 Compliance:** This policy is underpinned by and enforces our duties under:

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Safeguarding and welfare requirements on children's safety, supervision, and secure handover/collection arrangements.
- The Children Act 1989: Duty of care to safeguard children.
- The Childcare Act 2006: The legal framework for the provision of childcare.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: Statutory guidance on inter-agency working.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: Protecting staff and children on the premises.
- Equality Act 2010: Ensuring reasonable adjustments are considered where applicable.

## 3. Timely Collection and Late Charges

**3.1 Requirement:** Children must be collected by the end of their specific booked session (e.g. 1:00 PM or 6:00 PM).

- **Definition:** Late collection applies from the end of the child's booked session.
- **Closing:** The preschool's absolute final closing time is **6:00 PM**.

**3.2 Grace Period:** A strict **5-minute grace period** is permitted after a session ends to account for minor delays.

**3.3 Late Collection Charge:** Beyond the grace period, a late collection charge of **£10.00 per 10-minute interval** (or part thereof) will be applied.

- **Application:** This charge applies **per child**. Each started interval is charged (starting from minute 6).
- **Rationale:** This is not a penalty/fine. The charge reflects the additional cost of two staff remaining on site, associated insurance/security overheads, and administrative processing.
- **Discretion:** We may waive the charge once per academic year at management discretion for a genuine, documented emergency.

**3.4 Persistent Lateness:** Repeated failure to collect on time is a breach of contract. As detailed in our Fees, Funding, and Charges Policy, we reserve the right to terminate a child's place for persistent non-compliance.

#### 4. Procedure for an Uncollected Child

**4.1 Activation:** If a child remains uncollected after their session end time and parents/carers are unreachable, the following safeguarding protocol will be activated.

- **Timing:** Uncollected child escalation times run from the child's session end time, and where the child's session end time is at/after 6:00 PM, from 6:00 PM.
- **Vulnerability Override:** Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern (e.g. very young child, medical vulnerability, or specific risk factors), the Manager/DSL may escalate to Children's Social Care/Police immediately without waiting for the 30-minute threshold.

#### 4.2 Immediate Action (0–30 Minutes):

- **Staffing:** Where reasonably practicable and without compromising ratios, two staff will remain with the child to ensure they feel safe and reassured. Otherwise, the child remains supervised within the main group and a second staff member is deployed as soon as practicable.
- **Contact:** Staff will attempt to contact all registered parents/carers, followed by all registered emergency contacts, in the order listed on the child's file.
- **Logging:** A full timeline of calls and events will be recorded.

**4.3 Statutory Escalation (30 Minutes+):** If, after **30 minutes** past the relevant time, no authorised adult has been successfully contacted or has arrived:

- **Social Care:** In line with safeguarding guidance, the **DSL (or Deputy DSL / senior person in charge)** will contact **Children's Social Care** (via the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub / equivalent front door) to report a child uncollected / abandoned. Contact details are held in the setting's safeguarding contacts list.
- **Police:** If Social Care cannot be reached, or if advised by them, we will contact the **Police**.
- **Handover:** The child will only be released into the care of Social Services or the Police once they accept responsibility. Staff will not leave the premises until this handover is complete.

#### 5. Authorised Collectors

**5.1 Release:** Children will only be released to individuals who are named on the child's authorised collection list and are **aged 16 or over**.

- **Court Orders:** Parental Responsibility and court order requirements are governed by the **Arrival and Departure Policy**; where applicable, those rules override.

**5.2 Identification:** If a person unfamiliar to staff arrives for collection, we will check their identity and require the pre-agreed **collection password** before releasing the child.

**5.3 Changes:** Parents must notify us in advance if a different person is collecting. We require prior written notification via approved channels, or a recorded telephone confirmation using security questions/password. If we cannot verify safely, we will not release the child.

#### 6. Intoxicated or "Unfit" Parents (Safety Protocol)

**6.1 Duty of Care:** We have a duty of care to ensure no child is released into a situation of significant risk.

**6.2 Assessment:** If a parent or authorised collector arrives to collect a child and staff judge them to be **unfit to provide safe care** (e.g. they appear to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication, or are behaving aggressively):

### 6.3 Action Protocol:

- **Do Not Release:** The child remains inside the premises with staff.
- **Attempt to Dissuade:** Staff will calmly attempt to persuade the parent not to leave with the child and will offer to call a taxi.
- **Second Contact:** A second authorised collector is contacted immediately.
- **Physical Intervention:** Staff will **not** place themselves at risk or attempt physical restraint of an adult. Any physical intervention with a child will be minimal, proportionate, and only as trained/necessary to prevent immediate harm, and will be recorded.
- **Emergency Response:** If the unfit parent insists on leaving with the child (particularly if they intend to drive):
  - Staff will record vehicle details (where safe to do so).
  - We will immediately call the **Police (999)** to report an **immediate safeguarding risk**.
  - We will report the incident to **Children's Social Care** as a safeguarding concern.

## 7. Parent and Carer Responsibilities

**7.1 Contractual Duties:** Parents are contractually responsible for:

- Collecting their child on time.
- Informing the preschool immediately of any unavoidable delays.
- Ensuring all contact numbers (including emergency contacts) are kept up-to-date.
- Ensuring that anyone sent to collect the child is fit, responsible, and aware of the password.

## 8. Record Keeping and Retention

**8.1 Logging:** All incidents of late collection, non-collection, or safeguarding referrals are formally recorded.

- **Assessment:** The DSL/Manager will assess whether the incident meets the threshold for notification to Ofsted/other agencies and will act within required timescales.

**8.2 Retention:** These records are retained in line with our Data Protection Policy and safeguarding retention guidance. Where a safeguarding concern is recorded, retention is normally to the child's 25th birthday (subject to verification).

## 9. Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

**9.1 Adjustments:** In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we will consider reasonable adjustments to this policy for parents with disabilities or specific needs that may affect punctuality or communication.

- **Control:** Adjustments are agreed in advance, documented, and kept under review.
- **Limitation:** Adjustments cannot prevent escalation where a child is uncollected or at risk; safeguarding remains the paramount consideration.

## 10. Monitoring and Review

**10.1 Review:** This policy is reviewed annually or immediately following any significant incident to ensure it remains robust.

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