



Unsafe collection and drop-off of children

Definition

For the purposes of this procedure, a parent or carer may be considered unable to safely care for their child if they appear to be affected by alcohol, drugs (including prescribed medication where this impairs their ability), illness, a mental health crisis, extreme fatigue or any other condition that significantly affects their judgement, awareness or ability to keep their child safe.

Behaviours that may give rise to concern include, but are not limited to:

- Appearing affected by alcohol, for example smelling strongly of alcohol, slurred speech, impaired balance or reduced coordination.
- Appearing affected by drugs or medication, for example glazed or unfocused eyes, unusual drowsiness, confusion, rapid or incoherent speech, agitation or erratic behaviour.
- Displaying aggressive, threatening or intimidating behaviour towards others.
- Appearing extremely distressed, confused or disorientated, expressing irrational thoughts, hallucinations, delusions or thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

If there are concerns that a parent or carer may be unable to safely care for their child

- If staff believe that a parent or carer is unable to safely care for their child, they will take immediate steps to safeguard the child while treating the parent/carer with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Wherever possible, the Nursery Manager (or Deputy) and another member of staff will speak with the parent/carer in a private area, while another practitioner supports and reassures the child away from the situation.
- If the parent/carer refuses to move to a private area, staff will calmly reduce the number of children nearby and continue to manage the situation in a respectful, non-confrontational manner.
- The Manager will ask the parent/carer if they are feeling well and give them the opportunity to explain the situation.
- The Manager will explain the specific behaviours that have caused concern without making accusations or assumptions and will listen carefully to the parent's explanation.
- If, after considering the information available, the Manager believes the parent/carer is unable to safely care for the child, this will be explained calmly and professionally.
- The Manager will ask whether another suitable adult, who is listed as an authorised emergency contact, can collect the child.
- Staff will only release the child to another authorised adult where they are satisfied that the adult is able to provide safe care.
- If no suitable adult is available, or there are ongoing concerns for the child's safety, the Nursery Manager will immediately seek advice from Children's Social Care (or the Emergency Duty Team if outside office hours).
- Where advised, or where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, Children's Social Care will make arrangements for the child's safety.

- If any member of staff, child or parent is at immediate risk of harm, the police will be contacted by dialling 999. Children's Social Care will also be informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

Record Keeping

Following the incident, a detailed written record will be completed and stored securely.

The record should include:

- The date and time of the incident.
- The behaviours or observations that gave rise to concern.
- The actions taken by staff.
- Any conversations held with the parent/carer.
- Attempts made to contact emergency contacts.
- Advice received from Children's Social Care, the Police or other agencies.
- The outcome of the incident.
- The names and signatures of all staff involved.

The Nursery Manager will consider whether an Early Help Assessment (EHA) is appropriate or whether the concerns meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral in accordance with the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All information will be treated confidentially and shared only with professionals who need the information to safeguard the child.

