

**St Michael's CE Primary School
Sydenham**



Drop Off and Collections Policy

(Including Late and Uncollected Children)

Policy owner	Headteacher / Governing Body
Agreed by the Governing Body	Autumn 2026
Signed (Chair)	Beryl Fielder
Review date	Autumn 2029, or sooner if statutory guidance changes

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1. Purpose and scope

St Michael's CE Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. This policy sets out clear arrangements for safe arrival, handover, collection, late collection and situations in which a child remains uncollected. It applies to Nursery, Reception and Years 1–6, school-run after-school activity clubs and the school's wraparound After School Club.

The policy is intended to give parents/carers and staff a consistent procedure, reduce avoidable uncertainty at handover times and ensure that any pattern or incident that raises a safeguarding concern is responded to promptly and in the child's best interests.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been reviewed with regard to the statutory and legal framework in force in England in September 2026, including:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 – duties to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- Education Act 2002, section 175 (and equivalent safeguarding duties for relevant school types);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) – statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 – statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance;
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, updated July 2026, and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, together with current statutory information-sharing guidance for safeguarding children.

The school will also follow the current procedures of its local safeguarding partnership and local authority, including the local protocol for children who remain uncollected from school.

3. Principles and responsibilities

- Children must be appropriately supervised while they are in the school's care.
- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that children arrive safely and on time and are collected promptly by an authorised person, unless an agreed independent-travel arrangement applies.
- The school will act in the child's best interests where collection arrangements are unclear, unsafe or significantly delayed.
- Late or uncollected children will never be left unsupervised, sent home alone contrary to agreed arrangements, or transported home by a member of staff unless an exceptional arrangement has been formally authorised under an appropriate school procedure.
- Any safeguarding concern identified through arrival or collection will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy and managed under the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

4. Drop off and start of the school day

The gates open at 8.45am and close at the start of the school day at 8.55am. Children should not be dropped off outside the school gates and left unattended before staff supervision begins.

Children arriving after the normal admission period must enter through the school office/reception so that their arrival and reason for lateness can be recorded accurately. The school's Attendance Policy will specify the register closing time and the attendance code to be used; this policy should therefore be read alongside the current Attendance Policy rather than setting a conflicting registration rule.

Once a child has entered the school gates/playground and has been received into the school's care, the child must not leave the site without staff knowledge and an authorised arrangement. Nursery parents/carers may accompany their child to the Nursery entrance in accordance with the school's normal arrangements. Parents/carers wishing to enter the school building must use the main reception arrangements and must not enter through pupil corridor doors unless accompanied or authorised by staff.

5. Independent travel and siblings

There is no single statutory minimum age at which a child may travel to or from school independently. Decisions must take account of the individual child's age, maturity, understanding, SEND/additional needs, the route and any known safeguarding risks.

The school expects children in Early Years and Years 1–4 to be brought to and collected from school by a parent/carer or another responsible person authorised by the parent/carer. Any exception should be discussed with the school in advance.

For older pupils permitted to travel independently, parents/carers remain responsible for the journey before the child is received into school and after the child has been released in accordance with the agreed arrangement. The school may review an independent-travel arrangement where it has safeguarding concerns.

Where an older sibling is proposed as an escort or collector, the school will consider the ages and maturity of both children and any known risks. Parents/carers should agree the arrangement with the school; the school may decline an arrangement that it reasonably considers unsafe.

6. Collection at the end of the school day

Children will be released only in accordance with the school's agreed collection arrangements. Staff must remain vigilant and must not release a child where there is uncertainty about the collector's identity, authority or ability to provide safe care.

Phase	Normal finish	If not collected
Nursery	11.45am or 3.15pm	Follow the late/uncollected child procedure immediately after the session ends.
Reception, Years 1–2	3.25pm	Teacher remains with child until 3.30pm; then child is taken to the School Office (Junior Site) and the late collection is logged.
Years 3–6	3.30pm	Teacher remains with child until 3.40pm; then child is taken to the School Office and the late collection is logged.

Parents/carers should notify the school as soon as possible if they are unexpectedly delayed. Notification of a delay does not remove the requirement for the child to remain safely supervised until collected.

7. Authorised collectors and changes to arrangements

- Parents/carers must tell the school who is authorised to collect their child and keep contact details up to date.
- Any change to the usual collection arrangement should be communicated through an approved school channel. Staff should record significant changes so that the information is available to relevant colleagues.
- For children within the EYFS, the school will only release the child into the care of an individual whom the parent/carer has explicitly notified the school is authorised to collect.
- Where a collector is not known to staff, identity must be checked using the school's agreed verification procedure (for example, confirmed information/password and, where necessary, identification). A child must not be released if staff cannot verify the arrangement.

- Where adults with parental responsibility disagree about collection, the school will follow any court order or other legally binding restriction of which it has been provided with a copy. In the absence of such a restriction, the school will seek appropriate advice and prioritise the child's safety.

8. Late and uncollected children procedure

If a child is not collected at the expected time, staff will keep the child safe, supervised and reassured. The following procedure applies proportionately to the school day, Nursery, activity clubs and wraparound provision:

1. Confirm that no authorised collection message or change of arrangement has been received and check the child's known collection arrangements.
2. Contact the parent/carer using the current contact details held by the school. If there is no response, contact the authorised emergency contacts in the order recorded by the school.
3. Inform the school office and, where the delay is significant or there are safeguarding concerns, inform the DSL/deputy DSL or senior leader on duty.
4. Record the time collection was due, calls/messages made, people contacted, explanations received, collection time, collector and any safeguarding action or follow-up.
5. If no parent/carer or authorised emergency contact can be reached, or the child remains uncollected beyond the timescale in the local authority/local safeguarding partnership protocol, the DSL/senior leader will seek advice from Children's Social Care and/or the police as appropriate. Staff will not simply send the child home or leave the child unattended.
6. Repeated late collection, failure to maintain usable emergency contacts, or circumstances suggesting neglect or another risk to the child will be considered under the school's safeguarding procedures and may lead to early help or a referral to Children's Social Care where the threshold is met.

9. After-school activity clubs

- Booking a place confirms that parents/carers accept the stated finishing and collection arrangements.
- Children must be collected promptly at the notified end time by the authorised collector or released under an agreed independent-travel arrangement where appropriate.
- If a child is collected late, the incident will be recorded and the parent/carer reminded of the collection requirement.
- Persistent late collection may result in the club place being withdrawn following communication with the parent/carer. Any decision will take account of safeguarding, equality and reasonable-adjustment considerations.

10. Wraparound After School Club

- All children must be collected by 6.00pm.
- If a parent/carer cannot collect personally, they must notify the school office or After School Club Coordinator of the authorised alternative collector using the agreed communication/verification procedure.
- If a child is collected after 6.00pm, the published late collection charge is £1 per minute after 6.00pm, payable via Arbor.
- Late collection does not end the school's safeguarding responsibility. Staff will continue to supervise the child and follow section 8 where contact cannot be made or concerns arise.
- Persistent late collection, or persistent non-payment of applicable fees, may result in the wraparound place being reviewed or withdrawn. Before withdrawal, the school will consider the child's welfare, relevant equality duties, reasonable adjustments and any safeguarding circumstances.

11. Safeguarding concerns at collection

Staff must not release a child if they reasonably believe doing so would place the child at immediate risk. Examples may include uncertainty about an unauthorised collector, a collector whose behaviour gives rise to an immediate safety concern, or information indicating that collection would breach a known legal restriction.

Staff should remain calm, avoid confrontation where possible, seek support from the DSL/senior leader and follow the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy. Where there is an immediate risk of significant harm or an emergency, the police or Children's Social Care should be contacted as appropriate. Safeguarding information should be shared lawfully and proportionately; data protection law is not a barrier to sharing information where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

12. Children with SEND, medical needs or additional vulnerabilities

Collection arrangements will be adapted where reasonably necessary for children with disabilities, SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities. Individual plans may specify handover arrangements, communication needs, mobility or transport considerations, authorised collectors, medication or other safety measures. Staff should avoid assumptions and work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to agree safe arrangements.

13. Recording, information sharing and confidentiality

The school will keep proportionate records of late and uncollected children and significant changes to collection arrangements. Safeguarding records will be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and current information-sharing requirements. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis where necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child.

14. Charges and withdrawal of club places

Any late collection charge must be clearly published to parents/carers in advance and applied consistently. A charge is an administrative arrangement and must never replace the safeguarding response required for an uncollected child. The school will consider exceptional circumstances, equality duties and safeguarding information before deciding whether repeated lateness or unpaid fees should lead to withdrawal of a club place.

15. Roles and responsibilities

- The Governing Body: ensures appropriate safeguarding arrangements and oversight of this policy.
- The Headteacher: ensures the policy is implemented, communicated and reviewed.
- The DSL/deputies: advise on safeguarding concerns, referrals, information sharing and patterns of concern.
- Staff: follow the agreed handover, verification, supervision, recording and escalation procedures.
- Parents/carers: provide accurate and current contact details, communicate changes promptly, ensure safe and punctual arrival/collection and comply with agreed collection arrangements.

16. Related school policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Wraparound Care Policy / Risk Assessment
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan
- Data Protection / Privacy Notices
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy

- Charging and Remissions Policy (where applicable)

17. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and DSL will monitor patterns of late collection and any safeguarding issues arising from arrival or collection. The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body by Autumn 2029, and earlier where legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures or school arrangements change.