

Innsworth Preschool Late Collection and Uncollected Child Policy

Last Updated: June 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, Late Charges and Additional Attendance

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

Definition: Late collection applies from the agreed collection time at the end of the child's booked or authorised session time.

Closing: The preschool's absolute final closing time is 6:00 PM.

3.2 Grace Period: The preschool allows one 10-minute grace period for late collection.

3.3 Additional Attendance Charge: After this 10-minute grace period, any additional time will be charged as extra attendance. Extra attendance is charged by the hour. Once an additional hour has started, that full hour becomes chargeable.

- **Application:** Where a parent or carer contacts the preschool in advance to explain that they are running late, the additional time will be charged at the normal hourly rate of £6 per hour.
- **Unauthorised Attendance:** Where a parent or carer is late and has not contacted the preschool in advance, the additional time will be treated as unauthorised attendance and charged at double the normal hourly rate. As the normal hourly rate is £6 per hour, unauthorised attendance will be charged at £12 per hour.
- **No Further Grace Period:** There is no further grace period after the first 10 minutes. Once the grace period has passed, charges apply by the hour. If a chargeable hour has started, it is charged in full.

3.4 Meals During Additional Attendance: Where a child remains at preschool beyond their booked or authorised session time and is still present during the afternoon mealtime period, the preschool will provide the child with a meal. Parents or carers will be informed before the meal is provided wherever reasonably possible. This is to ensure the child's welfare, routine, and basic care needs are met while they remain on site, and any applicable meal charge will be applied in line with the preschool's current fees and meal charging arrangements.

3.5 Persistent Lateness: Repeated failure to collect on time is a breach of contract. As detailed in our Fees, Funding, and Charges Policy, repeated late

collection may lead to further action if it disrupts staffing, ratios, sessions, or the safe running of the setting.

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.

