



Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Uncollected Child and Missing Child Policy

Policy Originator	Nursery Manager / Head Teacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Governor Responsible	Chair
Date Approved	29 July 2026
Status	Statutory (EYFS statutory framework, para 3.100)
Review Period	Annually (next: July 2027)

This policy applies to Little Vitas Nursery and to all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision at Vita et Pax Preparatory School. It applies to all staff, students and volunteers. It is available on the nursery website and in hard copy from the school office, and is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

The EYFS statutory framework requires every provider to have, and to make available to parents and carers, clear procedures for the event of a child not being collected at the expected time, and for the event of a child going missing. This policy sets out both.

Part A — Uncollected Child

A1. Aims

Our aim is that a child who is not collected on time is kept safe, calm and reassured, cared for by familiar staff, and that every reasonable effort is made to reunite the child with a parent, carer or authorised adult as quickly as possible. A child is never our inconvenience: a late collection is almost always an accident or an emergency, and the child must never be made to feel it is their fault.

A2. Collection Arrangements

- On registration, parents provide the names, relationships and contact details of all adults authorised to collect their child, together with emergency contact details. We ask for more than two emergency contact numbers for each child wherever that is possible, so that there is always someone we can reach.
- We also record, for every child, the full name and date of birth, the name and address of every parent and carer known to us, details of any other person who holds parental responsibility, and which parent or carer the child normally lives with. Parents must tell us promptly of any change to any of this.
- Parents also agree a collection password with the nursery. Any adult not known to staff must give this password before a child is released.
- Children are released only to a parent, carer or an adult named on the child's record. Where a parent needs someone else to collect at short notice, they must telephone the school office on 020 8449 8336 and provide the person's name, relationship and the password. We will ask for photographic identification on arrival.
- We will not release a child to anyone under the age of 16.
- Staff record the time of every child's arrival and departure, and who collected them.
- Where the nursery is aware of a court order, or of any restriction on a named person having contact with a child, this is recorded confidentially and staff act accordingly. If an unauthorised person attempts to collect a child, staff will not release the child and will contact the resident parent and, if necessary, the police.

A3. Procedure if a Child is Not Collected

The following steps are taken from the child's expected collection time. Throughout, at least two members of staff remain with the child, one of whom is a suitably qualified practitioner holding an enhanced DBS certificate including children's barred list information. No adult begins working or volunteering with children at the nursery until that check has been received; the definition of regulated activity that applies is set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Safer Recruitment Policy. The child is kept within the nursery, engaged in normal play or a quiet activity, and is given a snack and drink if appropriate.

1. Up to 15 minutes late. Staff check the child's record for any message about a change to collection arrangements, and check whether the child is booked into a later session or wrap-around care. The Nursery Manager is informed.
2. 15 minutes. Staff telephone the parents or carers on all numbers held. If there is no answer, a message is left asking them to contact the nursery urgently.
3. 30 minutes. Staff telephone all emergency contacts held on the child's record, in the order given by the parents.
4. 45 minutes. The Nursery Manager informs the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL). Attempts to reach the parents and all emergency contacts continue at regular intervals, and each attempt is recorded with the time.
5. One hour after the expected collection time, where no contact has been made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead contacts the Enfield Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8379 2507 for advice, and follows the guidance given. Outside office hours, the Enfield Emergency Duty Team is contacted. If there is any reason to believe the parent or carer has come to harm, or the child is at risk, the police are called on 999 without waiting for the hour to elapse.
6. The child remains at the nursery, in our care, until collected or until Children's Services or the police assume responsibility. Staff must never take a child to their own home, transport the child in their own vehicle, or leave the child in the care of a single adult.

A full written record of the incident is made the same day, including all times, the calls attempted and their outcomes, the staff present, and how the matter was resolved. The record is held on the child's file and reviewed by the Nursery Manager.

A4. After the Event

- The Nursery Manager speaks with the parents to understand what happened and to check whether the family needs support. Repeated late collection is treated first as a possible sign of difficulty at home, not as a billing matter.
- Where late collection is persistent and without good reason, the school reserves the right to charge for the additional care provided, at the rate set out in our fees information. Parents will always be told before any charge is applied.
- If late collection continues, or gives rise to concern about a child's welfare, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether a referral to Children's Services is appropriate.

Part B — Missing Child

B1. Prevention

- The nursery premises are secure, with controlled entry and exit. External doors and gates are kept closed and secured, and visitors are signed in and accompanied.
- Staff-child ratios meet or exceed EYFS requirements at all times, including during outdoor play and on outings. Children are usually within the sight and hearing of staff, and always within sight or hearing.
- Children who are resting or asleep are always within the sight and hearing of a member of staff and are frequently checked. A sleeping child is counted in every register check and headcount, and is never left in a room on their own.
- Registers are taken on arrival and departure, and headcounts are carried out at each transition — for example on going outside, coming back indoors, before and after lunch, and at every change of room or activity.
- A risk assessment is completed for every outing, including headcount points, adult-child ratios, a meeting point and the procedure to follow if a child becomes separated. A register and mobile telephone are carried at all times.

B2. Procedure if a Child Goes Missing on the Premises

1. The member of staff who notices immediately alerts the Nursery Manager and the nearest colleague. The time is noted.
2. An immediate register and headcount is taken of all other children, who are gathered in one room with sufficient staff to keep them safe, calm and supervised.
3. Available staff conduct a systematic search of the building and grounds — including cloakrooms, toilets, cupboards, under furniture, outdoor equipment and any storage areas — with each area reported back as searched so that no area is checked twice by mistake.
4. The perimeter, gates and exits are checked, and any CCTV covering the exits is reviewed.
5. If the child has not been found within 10 minutes, the Nursery Manager calls the police on 999 and then telephones the child's parents. Searching continues while awaiting the police.
6. The Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead are informed, and the Chair of Governors is notified.
7. Staff follow police instructions from the point of their arrival, and preserve any relevant records or footage.

B3. Procedure if a Child Goes Missing on an Outing

1. The group leader is alerted and an immediate headcount and register check is taken.
2. One member of staff supervises the remaining children in a safe place at the agreed meeting point; the other staff begin a search of the immediate area.
3. Any venue staff, security or management are alerted immediately and asked to assist and to review CCTV.
4. If the child is not found within 10 minutes, the police are called on 999, followed by the child's parents and the Nursery Manager.
5. The remaining children are returned to the nursery as soon as it is safe to do so, with sufficient staff remaining at the venue to assist the police.

B4. Reporting and Review

- Any incident of a child going missing is recorded in full the same day, including timings, actions taken, staff involved and the outcome.
- The Governing Body is informed, and the incident is reported to the Independent Schools Inspectorate as a serious incident affecting the welfare of a child, in line with our obligations as an EYFS provider.
- Where a child has been harmed, or where the circumstances suggest a safeguarding concern, a referral is made to Enfield Children's Services and, where relevant, to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- A full review is carried out by the Nursery Manager and Head Teacher within five working days, covering how the child went missing, whether procedures were followed, and what must change. Risk assessments and this policy are updated accordingly, and the findings are reported to the Governing Body.
- The wellbeing of the child, the other children and the staff involved is considered, and support is offered.
- Any member of staff, including students and volunteers, who believes that these procedures are not being followed, or who has any other concern about poor or unsafe practice, must report it to the Nursery Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where they feel unable to do so, or feel their concern is not being addressed, they should use the school's Whistleblowing Policy, which sets out the routes available to them including the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line. Concerns raised in good faith are taken seriously by the senior leadership team, and no one is disadvantaged for raising one.

Staff Induction and Training

All staff, students and volunteers are taken through this policy at induction, before they work with children, and are told where to find it. The Nursery Manager confirms that they know the collection and password arrangements, the headcount points, and who to alert first.

Safeguarding training for all practitioners follows the criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS statutory framework and is renewed at least every two years. The school also considers whether any staff need refresher training within a two-year period. Annex C requires training to cover, among other things, how to identify signs of possible abuse, harm and neglect at the earliest opportunity — including inappropriate behaviour by a practitioner or any other person working with the children, such as excessive one-to-one attention beyond what the role requires or the inappropriate sharing of images. Full details are in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Related Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy (Nursery)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice
- Safer Recruitment Policy

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Settling-In Policy (Nursery)

Key Contacts

- Nursery Manager: Mrs K. Newton
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr D. May, Headmaster
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Mrs K. Newton
- Chair of Governors: Mr P. Acharya
- School Office: 020 8449 8336
- Enfield Children's MASH: 020 8379 2507
- Police / emergency: 999

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 29 July 2026