



Dropping off and picking up before and after school

Who is dropping off and who is picking up children?

A vital part of keeping children safe is ensuring the school knows who is responsible for dropping off and picking up a child.

Gathering information from parents and carers

On enrolment to Appledore School, we ask parents and carers to provide the following information for each child:

- the names and full addresses of parents and carers (including confirmation of parental responsibility or private fostering arrangements and any relevant paperwork)
- home, work and mobile phone numbers
- email addresses where appropriate
- two authorised adult contacts who may be called in the event of the parents or carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency
- information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child (with copies of any relevant legal documents).

The school uses a secure system to store this information and update it on an annual basis or when parents and carers provide new details (whichever is soonest).

Children travelling to and from school without supervision

There is no law that states what age children may travel to and from school unsupervised. Parents and carers should make their decision based on their child's maturity, ability and the safety and distance of the route to school.

Appledore School advises parents and carers with children under the age of 8 to make sure they are accompanied by an adult or an older sibling. If school has concerns about a child walking and from school unsupervised, for whatever reason, staff will discuss concerns with the parents or carers.

To help parents and carers decide whether their child is ready to either stay at home or go out alone NSPCC have a guide on their website www.nspcc.org.uk

Other siblings accompanying a sibling to and from school on a parent or carer's behalf

There is no law determining the age at which a sibling can accompany a child to school. It is ultimately up to parents and carers to decide whether they feel this is appropriate.

Factors that parents and carers should take into account include:

- the maturity of all the children involved
- the length and nature of the journey home
- the behaviour of all the children involved
- the relationship between the children collecting or being collected.

Appledore School prefers not to send a child home with a sibling unless the sibling is aged 14 or older. If school has concerns about a child walking and from school accompanied by a sibling, for whatever reason, staff will discuss concerns with the parents or carers.

How to manage disputes about drop off and collection

Problems around who should be picking up or dropping off a child can arise when there are disputes between a number of adults claiming to have parental responsibility. Senior leadership will speak with those in dispute to:

- ensure their dispute is not aired in front of their child and/or pupils of Appledore School children at drop off and collection
- a resolution is reached before the above could happen

To help schools understand and deal with issues relating to parental responsibility England has produced useful guidance.

In England, the Department for Education (DfE) has produced guidance on understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility available at www.gov.uk

What happens with late pick-ups, or if no one turns up?

Being late for pick up or not turning up at all can be a cause for concern, so procedures need to be in place to deal with this.

What happens if parents or carers are late to pick up their child?

Every school should have a procedure for late collection that all staff, parents and carers are fully aware of.

In the event of lateness for collection the school Appledore School will:

- reassure the child and ensure the child is supervised by a member of staff
- contact parents or carers
- call emergency contacts if parents and carers cannot be reached so an authorised adult can come and collect the child
- keep records of late collections.

If parents and carers have authorised someone else to collect the child, they may not always be aware the child is being collected late, so it's important to keep them informed if this happens.

Persistent lateness might indicate that a parent is struggling to meet their child's needs. Schools should contact parents or carers outlining their concerns. This should also be recorded as a safeguarding concern using the school's safeguarding procedures.

If school has ongoing concerns about a child's welfare, they may need to make a referral to children's social care so that the family can receive support.

What happens if parents or carers can't pick up a child?

If parents, carers or other authorised people are not able to collect the child and have arranged for someone else to come instead, the parents or carers must notify the school as soon as possible. Identification may be required when the person comes to collect the child.

When appropriate school uses a password system for collection of a child.

If nobody comes to collect the child, Appledore School makes every effort to contact the parents, carers or authorised person whose details have been supplied.

Until the child is collected, they will stay at school in the care of members of staff who have undergone the appropriate vetting and barring checks (one should preferably be the nominated child protection lead or deputy child protection lead).

School staff and volunteers should never:

- take the child home with them
- transport the child home
- go in search of parents/carers.

The nominated child protection lead should make a full written report of the incident. This report should be added to the child's safeguarding file. If appropriate, this report should also be shared with children's social care.

What happens if someone else comes to collect a child?

Schools should not allow children to go with any unauthorised person without first getting permission from parents or carers.

If a child's social worker is planning to collect them from school, this should be agreed in advance by the child's parents and carers.

If an unauthorised person arrives to collect the child, the Appledore School will contact the child's legal guardian. If the school is unable to make contact with the child's legal guardian, or the legal guardian does not give their permission, the school will explain that they are unable to release the child to anyone else without authorisation from the child's legal guardian.

If an unauthorised person refuses to leave the premises, becomes aggressive or violent or attempts an unauthorised removal of the child then it may be necessary to contact the police. This should be recorded as a safeguarding concern using the school's usual safeguarding procedures.

What happens if there are safeguarding concerns?

A safeguarding concern can arise at any time during the school day, so it's vital that all members of staff know exactly what to do in this event.

Responding to safeguarding concerns

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you must share your concerns.

- Follow the school's child protection procedures. This should include information on how to respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Contact your local child protection services. Their contact details can be found on the local authority website for the area in which the child lives.
- Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Our trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.
- Contact the police.

What to do if a child does not want to go home

If a child discloses that they don't want to go home because of abuse or neglect, then Appledore School will follow their child protection procedures.

If a child discloses abuse to you, it's really important to:

- show children you care and help them open up
- take your time and slow down
- show you understand and reflect back what they're saying.

What happens if parents and carers appear unable to provide safe care for their child?

There may be times when the school is worried that the adult collecting a child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or their behaviour otherwise suggests that they may not be in a fit state to safely look after the child.

In this case, the school should:

- contact another family member or authorised person to collect the child
- record the incident as a potential safeguarding concern
- for repeated instances of an adult appearing unfit to provide safe care should be discussed with children's social care.

If the school has immediate concerns about a child's welfare, and an alternative family member or authorised person is not available to collect the child, the school has a duty to prioritise the welfare and safety of the child.

The school should attempt to keep the child on the premises until they have received guidance or support from children's social care or the police on what action to take.

If, despite the school's efforts the parent insists on taking the child, then the school should:

- contact the police
- make a safeguarding referral to children's social care
- keep a full written report of the incident.

Who else needs to be involved?

Other external organisations may need to be involved in drop off or pick up from school. It's important to check they are also fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities.

Activities on school premises

The school's procedures for dropping off and collecting pupils should apply to after school clubs on the school premises.

For other organisations to use your premises for activities or events, Appledore School has a responsibility to make sure they are taking the right steps to keep children safe.

This can include:

- asking groups to share their safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures with you and check that these are adequate
- sharing your own safeguarding and child protection policy with the groups and ask them to comply with it (agreement should be given in writing).

Travel service between home and school

Whether by school bus, taxi or public transport, home to school travel is an integral part of the school system.

While it is the local authority's responsibility to make home to school travel arrangements it's also important for schools to support the local authority to deliver their home to school travel functions and ensure the safeguarding of children.

Department for Education (DfE) provides statutory guidance on home-to-school travel and transport for local authorities in England available at www.gov.uk