

Uncollected Children Policy

Little Lanes Out of School Club

Version: October 2026 | Applies to all staff and volunteers

Our commitment

Little Lanes will keep every child safe and supported until they are collected by an authorised person or handed into the care of an appropriate safeguarding agency. Children will never be left unattended because the Club has closed or because a parent owes fees.

Collection times and parent responsibilities

Little Lanes offers after-school sessions ending at 4:30 pm and 5:45 pm. The Club closes at 5:45 pm. Parents and carers must collect their child by the end of their booked session and telephone Cheri on 07950 875097 as soon as they know they will be delayed. If Cheri cannot be reached, they must contact the staff on duty directly. They must ensure staff have received the message, give an expected arrival time and agree any alternative authorised collection arrangements.

Parents must keep their telephone numbers, emergency contacts and authorised collectors up to date on iPAL. Being named as an emergency contact does not automatically authorise someone to collect a child. Staff will check the collection permissions and verify an unfamiliar collector's identity before releasing a child.

Late collection charges

A £10 late collection charge applies after the child's booked collection time of 4:30 pm or 5:45 pm. After 10 minutes beyond that booked collection time, an additional £5 is charged for each further five-minute period started. Notifying staff of a delay does not automatically waive the fee. Management may consider exceptional, genuinely unavoidable circumstances.

For a 4:30 pm session: collection at 4:35 pm or 4:40 pm — £10; at 4:41 pm or 4:45 pm — £15; at 4:46 pm or 4:50 pm — £20.

For a 5:45 pm session: collection at 5:50 pm or 5:55 pm — £10; at 5:56 pm or 6:00 pm — £15; at 6:01 pm or 6:05 pm — £20.

Late collection charges are explained in Little Lanes' terms and conditions.

Who manages the response

The manager or session leader coordinates contact attempts, supervision and any safeguarding escalation. Staff will alert the manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where concerns arise. They must not delay urgent action while waiting for a particular member of management.

Little Lanes will arrange for two suitable staff members to remain with an uncollected child, maintaining required ratios and appropriate first-aid cover. This is the Club's safeguarding arrangement. Staff reassure the child, meet their needs and avoid blaming or upsetting them about the delay.

When a child has not been collected

This procedure applies from the end of the child's booked session, whether 4:30 pm or 5:45 pm. A child booked until 4:30 pm is not automatically moved into the later session. Staff continue safe supervision while following the steps below.

Immediately after the expected collection time

Check any messages and agreed arrangements. If the delay is unexplained, telephone the parents or carers promptly; do not wait 15 minutes to begin. Leave a brief message asking them to contact the Club immediately, without disclosing unnecessary personal information.

If parents cannot be reached, promptly try the emergency contacts and establish whether an authorised adult can safely collect. Continue reasonable contact attempts and record the time and outcome of each. If a parent has reported a delay, agree an arrival time and follow up if that time passes.

At 15 minutes late — 4:45 pm or 6:00 pm

The manager or session leader reviews the situation, checks that all available contacts have been tried and confirms that safe staffing can continue. Keep the child reassured and supervised. A response from a parent does not remove the need to assess whether the collection arrangement is safe and realistic.

At 30 minutes late — 5:00 pm or 6:15 pm

If parents and carers cannot be reached and no safe collection has been arranged, contact Hertfordshire Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 for advice. Explain the child's details, collection arrangements, contact attempts and any relevant concerns. Record and follow their advice, including any instructions about further referrals or police involvement.

The 30-minute point is Little Lanes' escalation procedure, not a legal waiting period. Contact Children's Services earlier if there are safeguarding concerns, nobody suitable can collect, or safe care cannot continue. Call 999 if there is immediate danger.

While waiting and when the child leaves

The child remains in the care of Club staff, on the premises while it is safe to do so, until an authorised collector arrives or a safe handover to an appropriate agency is arranged. Staff must not take the child to their own home or leave to look for parents.

If the premises become unsafe or unavailable, follow the emergency procedure and coordinate a safe alternative with Children's Services and, where relevant, the school or emergency services. Notify parents directly of the arrangements. Any notice left at the premises must give only a neutral request to telephone the Club; do not display the child's name, destination or personal details.

Verify the identity and authority of anyone collecting, including agency staff, and record the handover. If a collector appears unable to care safely for the child, for example because of intoxication, seek immediate safeguarding advice and arrange a safe alternative. Call police if there is immediate danger; staff must not put themselves or the child at risk.

Recording and follow up

Routine late collection

Always record the actual collection time in the attendance register. For routine lateness without safeguarding concerns, add a brief note to the existing attendance or late collection record; no separate incident form is needed. Include the date, child's name, booked and actual collection times, any notification, reason if given, fee and staff initials. "No reason provided" is sufficient if none is given.

When a fuller record is needed

Use an incident or safeguarding record when parents cannot be reached and further contact attempts or escalation are needed, safeguarding concerns arise, or Children's Services or police become involved. Record contact attempts and times, responses, staff involved, concerns, decisions, agency advice and references, the verified collector and handover time, and follow-up actions.

Records are stored securely with access limited to those who need them. Safeguarding concerns are also recorded and managed under the Safeguarding Policy. Any required regulatory notifications are considered under that policy; a late collection is not automatically an Ofsted-reportable incident.

Repeated late collection

Management will discuss repeated lateness privately with the parent or carer, consider the reasons and any support needs, and agree a clear improvement plan. Parents will be reminded of their booked collection time, notification requirements and charges.

Patterns suggesting neglect or other harm are referred to the DSL and addressed through safeguarding procedures. Any decision to withdraw a place must follow the Club's published terms and consider the child's circumstances. It must never replace necessary safeguarding action or affect care for a child already at the Club.

Useful contacts

Parents reporting a delay — Cheri: 07950 875097
Hertfordshire Children's Services: 0300 123 4043
Includes urgent out-of-hours safeguarding support.
Immediate danger or emergency: 999

Approval and review

Adopted by: Little Lanes Out of School Club
Date approved: Megan Garratt Review date: October 2027
Signed: MG Name and role: Megan - Manager

Review within 12 months of adoption and sooner following a significant incident or a change in requirements or arrangements. Make this policy available to parents and brief all staff on the procedure.

References and related policies

Current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (September 2026), safeguarding and welfare requirements; Hertfordshire Children's Services safeguarding guidance. Read alongside Safeguarding, Emergency Evacuation Fire Safety and Closure, collection arrangements, and published booking terms.

Sources: www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Childrens-social-care/Child-protection/Report-child-protection-concern.aspx