

Handover, Collection and Uncollected Child or Young Person Policy and Procedures

Last Updated: March 2026

Purpose and Context

This policy sets out Kids arrangements for ensuring the safe handover of children and young people at the start and end of an activity or session. It recognises the need to have formal protocols and processes in place that ensure children and young people are delivered to and are collected from the right location, at the right time, on the right day by the right people.

The policy also outlines how Kids should support and manage independent travel arrangements for young people aged 18 years and over and those under 18 years who have parental consent to travel independently and decisions to leave an activity before the planned end time.

Finally, the policy covers unforeseen circumstances where a child or young person fails to arrive / attend when expected or is not collected at the agreed time.

This policy relates to all Kids activities with the exception of events where the child or young person attends with their parent/carer or where the child or young person has already been collected by a parent/carer or other authorised person.

The policy outlines the responsibilities of all colleagues when they are working on behalf of Kids.

Definitions

Colleague/s: The term includes employees, sessional workers, volunteers, students and trustees of Kids. This is also extended to independent contractors who are undertaking direct work with children or young people on behalf of the charity.

Community short breaks is a regular activity which always takes place in the community and is usually one to one with the same colleague/s allocated to the child or young person. Children and young people are usually collected and dropped off at or near to their home. If a domiciliary care colleague takes a child or young person out from their home this would be a community short break for the purpose of this policy.

Parent/carer for the purposes of this policy means both those with parental responsibility for children / young people under 18 and those who have responsible for day- to- day caring responsibilities of over 18s.

Parental Responsibility: Parental responsibility is the term used for the legal rights and responsibilities regarding decisions and provision that parents and carers make e.g. provision of a home, access to

education and medical care. Parental responsibility applies up to the age of 18 years. Parental responsibility will usually be held by parents and carers but can include Local Authority.

Colleagues need to be alert to the possibility that parental responsibility may be being disputed or withdrawn and ensure they have clarity on this for those children using the service.

Cared for children may be subject to a care order and in these instances, colleagues should liaise with the appropriate local authority contact to agree who can make decisions regarding parental responsibility.

General Policy Principles

- Parent/carers of children and young people using Kids services must be made aware of this policy and the need to follow the procedures and principles outlined.
- It is expected that, unless contact is made to inform colleagues otherwise, children and young people arrive and are collected at the times agreed with Kids to avoid raising concerns for their safety or disruption of service delivery.
- All children (under 18) require written consent from the person holding parental responsibility for them to leave a setting unaccompanied. Parent/carer consent should be supported by a risk assessment to ensure the safety of the child/ren (see procedures below)
- For young people aged over 18 the arrangements for their travel to and from settings should be clearly defined in a care plan and / or a risk assessment (see procedure below)
- Children and young people should not usually be collected by another person under the age of 16 although Kids recognises that there may be exceptions made in some circumstances.

Roles and Responsibilities

Service Managers and/or Service Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that parental responsibility has been established at initial registration and that this is clearly documented and known by colleagues involved in planning or following handover and collection arrangements.

Community Short Breaks colleagues are responsible for ensuring a parent/carer or agreed carer is in the home (or other agreed location) and aware of the break starting when they collect the child or young person, and when they return them.

All colleagues are responsible for ensuring they follow handover and collection arrangements and for reporting any attempted changes to agreed arrangements to senior colleagues.

General Procedures for Handover and Collection

As part of the registration process for a child or young person starting a service with Kids, colleagues and families must establish who will be handing over and collecting the child or young person. This information must be updated when the information changes otherwise annually. Information recorded must include:

- who holds parental responsibility
- whether the young person will make their own travel arrangements and any relevant risk assessment, care plan and record of these (consent if under 18 years old);
- who will be responsible for handover and collection if the child or young person does not travel independently;
- names and details of emergency contacts and alternative people to handover/collect;
- any specific risks around handover for example restrictions within Child Arrangement Court Orders;
- any password / safe word or agreed code for use by those collecting.

Parent/carer must make contact with the service or allocated community short breaks worker to cancel or rearrange if their child or young person is not attending a booked or planned session before the session starts. Non attendance should be followed up by colleagues to check that there is no cause for concern. Colleagues must be particularly mindful of the safety of those children and young people who travel independently to and from Kids activities.

Arrival/Handover at Kids activity

Parent/carer must ensure that they have made a Kids colleague aware of their child or young person's arrival at an activity and follow any local signing in procedures. Children and young people without an arrangement for independent travel must not be left to sign in alone.

Young People travelling independently to and from Kids Services

Written consent must be obtained from parent/carer with parental responsibility for children under 18 to travel to and leave Kids premises or activity unaccompanied by an adult.

Children aged 16 and over are deemed to have mental capacity to make decisions and colleagues should familiarise themselves with the Mental Capacity Act Policy and Procedures to ensure their understanding of how to include young people in planning their care and travel arrangements.

Parental responsibility does not apply to those aged 18 and over.

For all young people who are considered capable of making their own way to and from Kids activities, a risk assessment for this purpose must be completed. The risk assessment should be written with involvement from those who support or live with the young person and the young person themselves. It may be necessary to involve others who can contribute relevant information such as a social worker. This should be added to the child or young person's file and shared with colleagues whom it will be relevant.

Risk assessments should consider experience of independent travel, confidence, needs and abilities, method of travel and what to do in unexpected circumstances such as poor weather, if the young person is unsettled, if the activity finishes early. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to assess the route on which the child or young person take home and to ensure they are confident the child or young person has the ability to walk home safely. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer that the child or young person knows how and who to contact in the event of an emergency. Some mobile phones have a GPS tracking system and having an emergency ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in contacts are recommended.

At the end of each session, consideration must be given to the location, distance to travel, time of day and prevailing environmental conditions (e.g. busy roads, isolated areas, darkness, weather) to make a judgement on the safety of these conditions. If the conditions are judged to be unsafe, then the setting manager reserves the right to call the parent/carer and request that they arrange for a responsible person to collect the child or young person. Adequate notice must be given to ensure a timely handover.

Leaving before a session ends

There may be occasions where young people aged 18 years and above choose to leave a Kids activity before the planned end time and make their own way home. This is permissible where certain conditions are met:

- the young person has capacity to make such decisions and is capable of making their own way home or to another agreed location safely;
- there are protocols in place within the service for managing such instances including requiring young people to inform Kids colleagues before leaving an activity; why they want to leave and their intended destination – home or other location;

- individual risk assessments cover independent decision making and travel to ensure potential hazards are identified and managed. These should involve young people plus those who support or live with young people and, where relevant social workers;
- colleagues consider the young person's emotional well-being before allowing them to leave e.g., if they are particularly upset or agitated by something that has happened they should be encouraged to stay and resolve the issue with the support of colleagues;
- instances of young people leaving should be recorded in attendance records and analysed to monitor frequency / trends highlighting any individual issues or need to modify / change activities to better meet the needs of the young person.

Collection/Handover at end of Kids Activity

Settings should have recorded a list of agreed people who can collect a child or young person. An agreed code word or other form of identification must be used to confirm identification of the alternative person prior to handing over the child or young person.

If a person arrives to collect the child or young person who has not been agreed by the parent/carer, Kids colleagues must not release the child or young person into their care without having first called the person with parental responsibility or carer and had direct verbal confirmation that the handover can take place. Colleagues should satisfy themselves that the conversation is held with the person holding parental responsibility or usual carer through e.g., use of an existing contact number, code word or other verification means. The conversation should be recorded in the child or young persons records.

Community Short Break Workers who are returning a child or young person to a location other than their home should have specific instructions prior to the break taking place. This will include use of a code word or other verification if the child or young people is to be handed over to a person unknown to colleagues.

In the event colleagues have concerns about a parent/carer when they come to collect a child or young person or at handover back home (i.e. suspect that they may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol), attempts should be made to contact the child/young person's emergency contact to ask them to attend. If unable to contact an emergency contact colleagues must follow Kids Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy and Procedures and report concern immediately to Local Authority Duty Team and/or Police.

Kids does not have the legal right to stop a parent/carer taking back responsibility of any person in our temporary care. For example, in the case of marital or custody disputes, unless there is a Court Order of which we have knowledge, we do not have the right to prevent a child leaving with either parent.

Collection by Local Authority Transport

When a child or young person is to be collected from Kids service by Local Authority Transport this should be recorded in the child/young person's record with detail of any escort/s required. Colleagues must verify the identification of the driver and any escort/s before handing over child or young person. Verification should include review of driver/escort(s) Local Authority specific ID badge and evidence from driver of Local Authority request for transport for the child/young person.

If colleagues have any concerns about the identification of a Local Authority Transport driver they must not handover child/young person and contact Local Authority Duty Team for advice. Parent/carer should be informed immediately and Kids Safeguarding Children and Adult Policy and Procedures observed.

Uncollected Children/Young People

Parents carers are expected to collect at the time agreed with Kids colleague and are asked to telephone the setting if possible if they are going to be late.

If a child or young person remains uncollected at the end of an activity / session, the parent/carer must be contacted as soon as possible to ascertain the cause of the delay and how long it is likely to last.

If this person cannot be contacted or only their answer phone is available messages must be left requesting an immediate response and colleagues must try other emergency contacts for the child or young person in the order in which they are listed.

Whilst the child or young person is waiting to be collected, at least two colleagues should supervise them (except in the case of Community Short Breaks). Colleagues should continue to treat the child or young person in accordance with Kids policies and procedures. The child or young person should not be taken away from the setting unless necessary and under no circumstances should they be taken to a colleague's home. This includes Community Short Breaks workers.

On site colleagues should allow a period of 30 minutes for contact from the parent/carer then inform line manager/Head of Service and/or Kids On Call Team (if out of hours) and contact the Local Authority Duty Team for advice.

Off-site colleagues should allow 15 minutes from break ending and if for unable to hand over a child or young person then inform their line manager/Head of Service and/or Kids on Call Team (if out of hours) and contact to the Local Authority Duty Team for advice.

If the parent/carer for whatever reason is unable to give an arrival time and is unlikely to be able to resume their responsibilities as main carer a Head of Service and/or Kids On call Team member should liaise with the Local Authority Duty Team to agree next steps.

Review of late collection/delayed handover incidents

Incidents of late collection or delayed handover to parent/carer must be recorded in the child or young person's record and discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.

The service manager should review repetition of late collection /delayed handover. Services may implement a charge for late collection, and in some circumstances, incidents may be shared with a placing authority or local social services.

Parent/carers should be aware that late collection or delayed handover of a child or young person back to parent/carer may result in a financial penalty to cover the cost implications incurred by Kids. This penalty may take the form of a demand for financial recompense or a deduction in hours available to provide services on future occasions. The placing local authority will decide whether to meet this cost themselves or pass it on to the family. In the instance of families directly purchasing services themselves, they will be required to meet the costs incurred.

Training on this policy and procedure must be given during induction and updated through line manager briefings.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal or as grounds to terminate your contract with Kids.

References (Legislation, regulations and national guidance)

- Care Quality Commission, Guidance about compliance
- Children Act 1989

- Children’s Homes and Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children National Minimum Standards
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)
- Ofsted frameworks for the regulation of Early Years provision and Children’s Homes and Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children
- Travel to school for children of compulsory school age Statutory guidance for local authorities 2024
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023

Associated documents and guidance

- Kids Mental Capacity Act Policy and Procedures
- Kids Missing Child or Young Person Policy and Procedures
- Kids Registration Form
- Kids Risk Management Policy and Procedures
- Kids Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy and Procedures