

4. AUTHORISATION TO COLLECT CHILDREN (Includes GENERAL COLLECTION POLICY)

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Statement of Intent:

This policy aims to outline the protocols in relation to the collection of children from the service.

Attendance:

It is essential to the efficient running of our service that parents/guardians inform us if their child is unable to attend the service and follow up with a telephone call to inform management when the child will be returning. A register of the times and days that children attend is kept.

Arrivals:

- Parents/guardians gain access to the service by being let in by staff using the key fob for entry via the double-door.
- Parents/guardians please hand your children to a staff member and they will take responsibility for signing children in and out.
- Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that all external doors are securely closed for the safety of all the children when they leave.
- If a child will not be attending, we request that parents/guardians advise us.

Collection Policy:

The Collection Policy of will be achieved by:

- Parents/guardians must collect their child by the agreed collection time. Parents/guardians will be asked to give the names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child. If the parent is late arriving to collect the child, the person in charge will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent, the person in charge will contact the other named persons to collect the child.
- Children will not be released into the care of a person under the age of 18 years or to a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child. Should this situation arise, the staff will contact an authorised collector. If no one is available to collect the child, then the person in charge should contact the TUSLA social work child protection team or Garda.
- We ask that parents/guardians do not collect their child from while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If parents/guardians feel that this situation may arise they should arrange for an authorised collector to collect their child.
- In the event of a parent collecting another child a prior arrangement must be made.

Attempted collection by a person who is not on the child's records:

Children should be collected only by the adult/s named on the Collection Authorisation. If a person who is not named on the Collection Authorisation comes to the Service to collect a child, the parent/guardian will be contacted by phone for verbal authorisation. Staff will ask if this person should be added to the Collection Authorisation list, and Parent/Guardian will provide a signature as confirmation. If the parent personally arranges the collection of their child by someone not currently on the list with staff/management, the person may be asked to provide I.D. if staff have not met them before.

If the parent has not been personally contacted to authorise the collection of their child, or cannot be reached by phone for verbal authorisation, the child will not be permitted to leave the premises until an authorised collector, as recorded in the child's records is available/contacted.

Late Collection of Children:

We understand that sometimes a parent is unavoidably delayed when coming to collect their child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. Parents/guardians in this situation must contact the Manager to say that they will be late and arrange with staff what to do. Children are only released from the service to individuals named by the parent.

We reserve the right to charge a late collection fee for persistent lateness in collection of children. Our fee is €10 for every 30 minutes late.

Early Collection of Children:

We ask that parents/guardians let us know if they will be picking up their child early so that we can have the child ready and minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

Late Drop Off:

We ask parents/guardians to drop children off at the correct time to avoid disrupting the group once they have started and so that they child benefits from the full daily programme.

Separated and Divorced Parents:

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this.

- We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a court order is in place.
- We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
- Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask parents to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there are any legal documents i.e. custody order, barring order we would ask parents to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

Attempted collection by a parent who has been denied access in a court order:

- A parent who has been denied access to a child through a court order will not be permitted on to the premises
- If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the service, this will be viewed as trespassing. The service will in this event contact the Local Garda.

By law, an unmarried mother is the automatic guardian of a child born outside of marriage. In some circumstances, unmarried fathers have automatic access. The service should be informed about access rights. Unmarried fathers will automatically become guardians of their children if they meet a cohabitation requirement. An unmarried father who cohabits for 12 months with the child's mother, including 3 months following a child's birth, will automatically become the child's guardian. This provision is not retrospective, so guardianship will only be acquired automatically where the parents live together for at least 12 months after 18 January 2016.