Little Disciples Childcare

Arrival & Collection Policy

"Caring for children, supporting parents and sparking imaginations. Where quality, affordability and excitement meet!"

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Policy Statement

At Little Disciples Childcare, we are committed to providing a seamless and cohesive approach to childcare across all our services. This policy and procedure apply equally to both our Nursery Plus provision and our Breakfast, Afterschool, and Holiday Club services. This integrated framework ensures consistent standards of care, safety, and quality across all aspects of our provision, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for every child in our care.

Arrival and Collection of Children Policy

1. Purpose

Little Disciples Childcare is committed to ensuring that every child arrives, transfers between services and leaves the setting safely.

This policy explains:

- how children are received and registered;
- how responsibility for a child is transferred;
- how absences and unexpected non-attendance are managed;
- who may collect a child;
- what happens when collection is late or a child is not collected; and
- how staff respond when releasing a child could place them at risk.

This policy applies to Breakfast Club, Nursery Plus, After School Club, Wraparound Care and Holiday Club.

2. Responsibilities

The Person in Charge is responsible for implementing this policy. All staff must understand the arrival, attendance, handover and collection procedures relevant to their role.

Parents and carers must:

- provide accurate contact and collection information;
- keep their iPal account up to date;
- inform the setting if their child will be absent or late;
- ensure their child is handed directly to a member of staff where parental drop-off applies;
- collect their child by the relevant closing time; and
- notify the setting promptly if collection arrangements change.

3. Attendance records

A live daily register will be maintained on iPal for every session.

The register must record:

- the child's name;
- the date and session attended;
- the child's actual arrival time;
- the child's actual departure time;
- the staff responsible for the child;
- the name of the person collecting the child, where applicable; and
- any transfer between the school, Nursery Plus and After School Club.

Absence and non-attendance

If a child is not attending or is absent from a booked or expected session, **a reason must be recorded on the register**. Acceptable recorded reasons may include:

- illness;
- medical or dental appointment;
- holiday;
- absent from school;
- booking cancelled by parent/carer;
- alternative collection arrangement;
- family circumstances; or
- another confirmed reason.

Blank register entries must not be left for children who were expected to attend.

If the reason is not known, staff will record **"reason not yet known"**, together with any attempts made to contact the parent, school or other relevant person. The register must be updated when the reason is confirmed.

Parents and carers should report an absence through iPal or by contacting the setting as soon as possible and, wherever possible, before the session begins.

Where an unexplained absence or failure to arrive causes concern for a child's welfare, staff will consult the Manager (Responsible Individual & Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Manager.

iPal failure

If iPal is unavailable, staff will use the setting's paper contingency register. The paper record must include actual arrival and departure times and reasons for absence. It will be reconciled with iPal as soon as the system becomes available.

4. Breakfast Club arrival

Parents and carers must bring their child to the brown porch entrance and ring the doorbell.

The parent/carer must remain with the child until:

- a member of staff has opened the door;
- the child has been positively identified;
- the member of staff has accepted responsibility for the child; and
- the child's actual arrival time has been entered on the register.

Children must not be left outside the entrance or sent into the building without staff acknowledgement.

At the end of Breakfast Club, staff will complete an active handover to the school. Any discrepancy between the children attending and the school's information must be resolved immediately.

5. Nursery Plus arrival and transfer

Children attending Nursery Plus will normally transfer directly from their nursery session in Class 1.

Nursery Plus staff will:

- obtain the current list of booked and expected children;
- receive a direct handover from school staff;
- check each child by name;
- complete a headcount;
- record the child's transfer and attendance on iPal; and
- confirm that all expected children are accounted for.

Responsibility transfers to Little Disciples Childcare only when Nursery Plus staff have acknowledged and recorded the handover.

If an expected child is not present, staff will immediately check with the class teacher or school office. If the child's whereabouts cannot be confirmed, the parent/carer will be contacted and the missing-child or safeguarding procedure followed where necessary.

6. After School Club arrival and transfer

Class teachers or playworkers will accompany children from Classes 1 and 2 to the club base.

Children from Classes 3 and 4 will be led downstairs with their classes and handed directly to After School Club staff in the school hall. Children must not simply be directed to the hall without confirmation that a member of club staff has received them.

After School Club staff will:

- check children against the current iPal booking list;
- receive a clear handover from school staff;
- record each child's arrival;
- complete a headcount; and
- resolve any discrepancy immediately.

The school and setting must communicate cancellations, additional bookings, early collections and other changes before the transfer takes place. Verbal changes must be confirmed and recorded.

7. Nursery Plus collection and transfer

Children attending Nursery Plus will either:

- be collected at 3 pm; or
- transfer directly into the care of the After School Club.

Children not attending After School Club will be released from the brown porch entrance by a member of staff. Their departure time will be recorded.

For children transferring to After School Club, Nursery Plus and After School Club staff will complete a direct handover. The receiving staff member will check the children by name, complete a headcount and record the transfer on iPal.

8. General collection procedure

Children must be collected by the end of the relevant session:

- Nursery Plus: no later than 3pm (Unless child is attending afterschool childcare)
- After School Club: no later than 6 pm; and
- Holiday Club: no later than 5:30 pm.

Parents and carers must ring the doorbell at the brown porch entrance unless the setting has communicated an alternative arrangement. The collector must approach a member of staff and state which child they are collecting. Staff will verify the collector before bringing the child to the entrance. A child will not be marked as having left until responsibility has been transferred to the authorised collector. The actual departure time and collector's name will then be recorded promptly. Staff must ensure the entrance remains secure and must prevent unauthorised entry or children leaving unnoticed.

9. Authorised collectors

Parents and carers must record on iPal the people authorised to collect their child and provide a collection password.

The collection password supports the identification process but does not, by itself, establish that a person is authorised.

Staff will consider:

- whether the person is named on the child's record;
- whether the correct collection password has been provided;
- whether the person is known to staff; and
- whether photographic identification is required.

The setting may undertake any additional checks it considers necessary. A child will not be released if the collector's identity or authority cannot be satisfactorily confirmed.

Authorised collectors should normally be aged 18 or over. Any proposal for collection by a person under 18 must be agreed in writing beforehand and individually risk assessed.

10. Changes to collection arrangements

Parents and carers must notify the setting of permanent changes through iPal.

A one-off or emergency change must be communicated by a parent/carer authorised to make that decision through:

- their authenticated iPal account;
- a telephone call from a number already held on the child's record; or
- another method whose authenticity can be verified by the Person in Charge.

Staff will record:

- who requested the change;
- the date and time;
- the new collector's name;
- how the request was verified; and
- any identification checks required.

A message from an unrecognised number, an unverified email or the collection password alone will not be sufficient authority to release a child.

11. Parental responsibility and court orders

Parents and carers must inform the setting of relevant arrangements concerning parental responsibility, care arrangements, legal restrictions or court orders. The setting may request appropriate documentary evidence, which will be stored securely.

The setting will not become involved in disputes between parents or carers. Decisions will be based on:

- the child's welfare;
- verified information held by the setting;
- parental responsibility;
- any applicable court order or safeguarding plan; and
- advice from statutory services where required.

If a dispute occurs at collection, staff will not release the child until the Manager/Deputy Manager is satisfied that it is safe and lawful to do so.

12. Children leaving independently

Children attending Little Disciples Childcare will never be permitted to leave the setting unsupervised.

Children may leave school independently, but permission must be granted by the headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/manager. If the child is due to attend Little Disciples Childcare, this must be recorded on the register.

13. Concern about a collector

If a collector appears intoxicated, impaired, threatening, aggressive or otherwise unable to safeguard the child, staff will not voluntarily release the child while concerns remain.

Staff will:

- keep the child safely supervised;
- inform the Person in Charge and Designated Safeguarding Person;
- seek another suitable authorised collector;
- avoid confrontation where possible;
- contact Children's Social Services for advice where appropriate; and
- call the police on 999 if the child, staff or another person is in immediate danger.

The incident, decisions made, advice received and eventual handover must be recorded. Any necessary safeguarding referral or CIW notification will be completed.

14. Late collection

The late-collection procedure begins as soon as a child has not been collected at their agreed collection time.

Staff will:

1. Contact the parent/carer.
2. Contact the authorised emergency contacts if the parent/carer cannot be reached.
3. Keep the child safely supervised and reassured.
4. Avoid discussing penalties or expressing criticism in front of the child.
5. Record all calls, messages, decisions and collection times.

A late fee of **£15 for each 15-minute period, or part of a period, after the relevant session closing time** may be charged. This means £15 for up to 15 minutes, £30 for up to 30 minutes, and so forth. Exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Person in Charge. Safeguarding action will never be delayed because of a fee or payment dispute. Persistent late collection may result in a meeting with the parent/carer, review of the child's place and consideration of whether there are wider welfare or safeguarding concerns.

15. Failure to collect

If a child remains uncollected and no suitable arrangement has been confirmed, the child will remain safely supervised at the setting. A child will never be left alone.

At least two staff will remain on duty in accordance with the setting's staffing requirements. Staff will not take the child home.

If there has been no contact or satisfactory arrangement by **15 minutes after the setting's closing time**, the Person in Charge will seek advice from:

- **Flintshire Children's Social Services during office hours: 01352 701000**

- **Flintshire Duty Social Worker outside office hours: 0345 053 3116**

Staff will call **999** if the child appears to be in immediate danger.

The setting will follow the instructions of Children's Social Services or the police. The child will only be handed over to an authorised collector or statutory service acting with appropriate authority.

The Person in Charge will record:

- the expected collection time;
- all attempted contacts and their times;
- staff remaining with the child;
- advice received;
- decisions and actions taken;
- the child's presentation and any support provided;
- the eventual handover details; and
- the actual departure time.

The Responsible Individual and Designated Safeguarding Person will be informed. The setting will consider whether a safeguarding referral or notification to Care Inspectorate Wales is required.

16. Holiday Club

Arrival

Parents and carers must bring children to the brown porch entrance, ring the doorbell and remain until a member of the Little Disciples team has accepted responsibility for the child.

The child's actual arrival time will be recorded on iPal. If an expected child does not attend, the reason for absence must be obtained and recorded in accordance with section 3.

Collection

Parents and carers must ring the doorbell at the brown porch entrance. Staff will verify the collector and record the collector's name and the child's actual departure time.

The authorised-collector, identification, password, late-collection and failure-to-collect procedures in this policy apply equally to Holiday Club.

17. Confidentiality and record retention

Attendance, absence and collection information will be handled securely and only accessed or shared for legitimate operational, safeguarding or legal purposes.

Attendance records will be retained for at least three years after the child's last attendance, or longer where required by the setting's insurer, safeguarding requirements or another legal obligation.

18. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside the settings:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Lost, Missing and Not Collected Child Procedure;
- Admissions Policy and Parent Contract;
- Emergency Closure and Evacuation Procedure;
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy;
- Behaviour Policy; and
- Complaints Policy.

19. Monitoring and review

The Responsible Individual and Person in Charge will review this policy annually and sooner following:

- a safeguarding or collection incident;
- changes to legislation or Welsh Government standards;

- updated advice from Care Inspectorate Wales or Flintshire County Council;
- changes to the premises or operating arrangements; or
- identified concerns about how the procedure operates in practice.

Staff will receive appropriate instruction on this policy and periodically practise register reconciliation, unexpected-absence and uncollected-child scenarios.