

Emergency Contact and First-day Calling Procedures for Early Years and Childcare Providers

Within your policies and procedures that support the EYFS legislation, you are required to monitor the attendance of children attending your provision. Monitoring of attendance should form part of the provision's Health and Safety policy, Safeguarding policy and Child Protection procedures.

There have been three cases, one in Calderdale, that have come to the attention of the Calderdale Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB). These highlight the need for more robust emergency contact details and for first-day calling procedures. The cases summarised below emphasise that robust procedures are not only important for children who may be considered 'vulnerable' but are important for all children, as their absence may be an indication that they have become vulnerable.

- A mum died from an epileptic seizure while bathing her children age 3 and 4. The next morning the school phoned home immediately after checking registers, there was no answer and so they continued ringing through the contact list until they had an answer. A family member went straight to the house and found mum had died, but the children were safe.
- A dad died from natural causes, while caring for his children aged 2 and 4. Mum was working away from home. In the morning mum rang dad and there was no answer, but she assumed he was doing the school run and continued with her working day. The school noted the absence of the 4-year-old. They started their first day calling procedure 2 hours after registration and rang dad only, leaving a message. They did not ring anyone else on the contact list. They repeated the call to dad at 3.40. Mum rang home at the end of her working day and was now worried so she rang another mum from school. Grandmother went to the home and could not gain access because of a key in

the lock inside. The police gained entry at 8pm; the children had been alone with their deceased dad all day.

- A mum died. School made a call to her when the child was not at school; the contact list was not used. No further calls were made. A letter was sent to the parent 3 days later. Eventually the house was entered 5 days later. The child, age 6 or 7 had also died. The child was non-verbal and had SEN.

As a result of these concerns, it is expected that Early Years and Childcare providers review their current procedures and adopt recommendations where appropriate.

In the context of a child being absent without contact from parent please consider the following:

- Are registers completed in a timely manner i.e., immediately as children arrive and leave?
- Who is responsible for checking registers are completed each session?
- Who is responsible for following up an absent child?
- What are appropriate timescales for contacting the emergency contacts?
- When would it be appropriate to share the emergency contact details? (With who, when and how?)
- How often do you ensure your emergency contact details are up to date?
- Have you gained emergency contact details of someone who does not live in the same household as the family?

Sample Early Years First-Day Calling Procedure

- 1) Registers completed appropriately – including accurate times of arrival, departure and who brought and collected the child.
- 2) Late children are checked against registers.
- 3) Absence calls are listened to and attendance emails are checked
- 4) The first-day calling text is sent to the first name on the contact list within half an hour of the expected time of arrival
- 5) If there is no response to the text start calling the first name on the contact list within 45 minutes of the expected start time
- 6) Ring down contact list until a reply is received, ensuring where ever possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted.
- 7) Alert the provision manager and DSL that this child is absent and no contact has been made within an hour of their expected start time.
- 8) If there is still no reply send a second text and an email to first and second contacts on list.
- 9) Contact any other agencies involved to ascertain whether they have had any information which may be helpful, or know the whereabouts of the child or family, and contact MAST to see if there has been any incident that they are aware of.
- 10) A home visit should be made if possible and appropriate by the provider or another agency involved.
- 11) A risk assessment should then be completed:
No apparent risk: There is no apparent risk of danger to either the child. This may be appropriate for children who you have reason to believe are absent from the provision but not at harm due to previous patterns of behaviour or information from other people e.g. a child who often goes on holiday at this time of year and parents always fail to inform you. You should continue to make enquiries, but it would not be proportionate to contact police at this stage.

(Risk Assessment continued)

Low or medium risk: The risk of harm to the child is assessed as a possible but minimal risk **OR** the risk of harm to child is assessed as likely but not serious. This may be relevant for those children where there are no additional vulnerabilities, however, you have minimal contact information and making parental contact is always difficult.

High risk: The risk of serious harm to the child is assessed as very likely. This would be relevant for children already considered vulnerable. This may be due to risk of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. You should also consider child sexual exploitation and Prevent, in addition to protected characteristics; mental health, forced marriage, honour based violence, trafficking, and female genital mutilation. This may also be relevant for those children where the absence and lack of ability to make parental contact is highly unusual.

- 12) If this is assessed as 'No Apparent Risk' as a provider you can make the decision to continue to make enquires and not contact the police if you do not feel that this is necessary or proportionate. These cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over time and consideration given to escalation if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.
- 13) If assessed as 'Low or Medium Risk' – contact the Police on 101 and complete the referral checklist (please also see Key Information on last page of this procedure).
- 14) If assessed as 'High Risk' and there is a need for an immediate response, then contact the Police on 999 (please also see Key Information on last page of this procedure).
- 15) Providers enquiries continue and any further information shared with Police.
- 16) Use your chronologies to record your concerns, actions and decisions.

Sample Emergency Contact Form

Child's Details

Child's Surname		Child's Forename	
Date of Birth		Cohort Year	
Address			
Child's phone number (if they have their own)			
Adult(s) at this address			
Sibling		Provision eg School/nursery etc Contact details	
Sibling		Provision eg School/nursery etc Contact details	
Sibling		Provision eg School/nursery etc Contact details	

Contact Details (Please include at least one contact that does not live at the same address as the child)

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Contact Details of Key Professionals (e.g. EISA, CP or CLA – Social Worker/Health visitor/Family Support Worker)

Name		Relationship to Child	
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Name		Relationship to Child	
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Name		Relationship to Child	
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Date completed:

**Early Years Provider
First-Day Calling Procedure – Checklist**

(to accompany referral to Police 101)

Name of Provision: _____

Contact Name & Number: _____

- 1) First day text sent to first name on contact list at _____ am:
 - a. Name: _____ Number: _____
- 2) No response received to text so called first name on contact list at _____ am
- 3) No contact made so rang down contact list
 - a. Name: _____ Number: _____
 - b. Name: _____ Number: _____
 - c. Name: _____ Number: _____
 - d. Name: _____ Number: _____
- 4) No reply, so sent second text and email to first and second contacts at ____ am
- 5) Other agencies involved with child:

- 6) Any information from MAST _____
- 7) A Home Visit was made at _____ am to the following address:

By (please tick):

- a. Provider
- b. Other agency (please specify) _____
- c. It has not been possible to do a Home Visit

Comments regarding home visit or reason why home visit has not been done:

Child is assessed as Low/Medium/High Risk _____

Key Information

(Relevant when contacting the Police – this is for all aged children so you will need to ensure the relevant information to the child in your care is gathered as far as you are able)

When contacting the police on either 101 or 999 this is the key information that they will need to know to enable them to respond appropriately:

- Name/Gender of the child and any aliases with correct spellings
- Child's date of birth
- Description of child (have you a recent photo?)
- Home addresses (and any other addresses that may be relevant)
- When were they last seen?
- Has this behaviour happened before/have they been missing before?
- Does the child/parent/carer have any illnesses?
- Does the child/parent/carer take any medication? If so, to your knowledge, when was it last taken and when is it due again?
- Are there any issues with alcohol or drug misuse within the household?
- Does the child or the parent/carer have a mobile phone number? (Has someone tried to contact and what was the response? Was it turned off? Was a message left?)
- Does the child/parent/carer use social media? (What sites? Has anyone checked for activity?)
- Any known locations of where they may be? Any known associates? Any contacts that you have concerns about?