Child Collection & Safe Release Policy – Shares Lancashire Haf & Holiday Club

Child Collection and Safe Release Policy & Procedure

SHARES Lancashire Holiday Club and Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Provision

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1. Policy Statement

SHARES Lancashire is committed to ensuring the safe collection and release of all children attending our Holiday Club and HAF provision. The safety and welfare of children remain our highest priority at all times, including at the end of each session.

This policy recognises that HAF provision is designed to support families and that charges cannot be applied for late collection. However, consistent late collection places pressure on staffing, safeguarding arrangements, and children's wellbeing. This policy therefore sets out a supportive, fair, and proportionate approach, including a staged system of reminders ("strikes"), while remaining aligned with the purpose and values of HAF.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children attending SHARES Lancashire Holiday Club and HAF provision
- Parents and carers responsible for collection
- SHARES Lancashire staff responsible for supervision and safeguarding

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3. Legal and Statutory Framework (UK)

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004 – duty to safeguard and promote welfare

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010 – reasonable and proportionate approach
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Lancashire County Council HAF Provider Expectations

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4. Safe Collection Expectations

Parents/carers must:

- Collect their child promptly at the stated session end time
- Ensure collection details are accurate and up to date
- Inform SHARES Lancashire as soon as possible if they are delayed

Children will only be released to:

- A parent/carer named on the registration form
- An alternative authorised adult (with prior consent and ID where required)

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5. Safe Release Procedure

At the end of each session:

- Staff will supervise children in a designated collection area
- Staff will verify the identity of the collecting adult if unfamiliar
- Children will not be released until staff are satisfied it is safe to do so

Children will never be allowed to leave unsupervised unless written parental consent has been provided and approved.

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6. Late Collection Procedure (No Charges Applied)

Where a child is not collected by the stated session end time, the following time-based safeguarding thresholds will apply. At no point will financial penalties be charged, in line with HAF requirements.

0–10 minutes late

- Child remains supervised by staff
- Parent/carer contacted if no prior notice given
- Incident logged as a late collection

10–20 minutes late

- Continued supervision by staff
- Further attempts made to contact parent/carer and emergency contacts
- Senior staff informed
- Incident recorded and counted toward the staged support system

20–30 minutes late

- Senior staff take lead responsibility
- Repeated contact attempts made
- Safeguarding risk considered
- Incident escalated and recorded formally

30 minutes or more late

- Treated as a safeguarding concern
- Senior manager informed immediately
- Children's Social Care or Police may be contacted if no contact can be made
- Full incident report completed

Late collection will always be managed with a supportive and child-centred approach, but safeguarding duties take precedence.

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7. Staged Support, Penalties and Strike System

In recognition that HAF provision must remain accessible and supportive, SHARES Lancashire does not apply financial penalties. Instead, a proportionate non-financial penalty system is used where late collection is persistent.

Strike 1 – Reminder

- Triggered after one late collection (over 10 minutes)
- Verbal reminder of collection times and policy
- Logged internally

Strike 2 – Formal Support Discussion

- Triggered after a second late collection
- Formal conversation with parent/carer
- Barriers explored and support offered
- Written record kept

Strike 3 – Final Review / Penalty Applied

- Triggered after a third late collection
- Written warning issued
- Penalties may include:
    - Restriction on future bookings
    - Reduction in number of sessions offered
    - Temporary suspension of bookings

Persistent late collection may result in:

- Withdrawal of the child's place as a last resort
- Referral to appropriate support services if safeguarding concerns are identified

All decisions will be fair, proportionate, and consider individual family circumstances and the purpose of HAF provision.

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8. Exceptional Circumstances

SHARES Lancashire understands that emergencies happen. Exceptional circumstances will:

- Be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Not automatically count toward the strike system
- Be managed with understanding and flexibility

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9. Failure to Collect a Child

If a child has not been collected within a reasonable time and contact cannot be made:

- Senior staff will be informed immediately

- Continued attempts to contact parents/carers and emergency contacts will be made
- If necessary, Children's Social Care or the Police may be contacted in line with safeguarding procedures

This will always be treated as a safeguarding matter.

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10. Recording and Monitoring

- All late collections will be recorded
- Patterns will be monitored by the HAF Manager or Area Manager
- Records will be stored securely in line with data protection requirements

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11. Equality and Inclusion

SHARES Lancashire will:

- Take a fair and inclusive approach
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate
- Ensure actions do not unfairly disadvantage families experiencing hardship

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12. Responsibilities

Parents/Carers:

- Ensure timely collection
- Communicate delays promptly

SHARES Lancashire Staff:

- Ensure children are supervised at all times
- Follow safe release procedures
- Record and report concerns

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13. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes to legislation or LCC HAF guidance.

Next Review Date: 27th January 2027

Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the SHARES Lancashire Child Collection and Safe Release Policy.

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____