

Managing Pupil Collection

Policy Version Control	
Policy type	Academy Trust
Policy prepared by (name and designation)	Mark Dent – Director of Education
Last review date	14.05.26
Description of changes	New policy
Date of Board of Trustees approval	21 st May 2026
Date released	21 st May 2026
Next review date	Summer 2027

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to managing disputes between adults with parental responsibility (PR) in relation to the collection of pupils, ensuring that:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount
- Staff act consistently, lawfully, and defensibly
- The Trust does not adjudicate parental disputes

2. Legal and Safeguarding Framework

This section should be read in conjunction with:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*
- DfE guidance on parental responsibility
- The Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Trust recognises that:

- Multiple individuals may hold parental responsibility, and they have equal legal status unless restricted by court order
- The Trust must not take sides in disputes between those with PR
- The Trust has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils

3. Core Principles for Staff

All staff must adhere to the following:

- The child's safety overrides all other considerations
- Only known and authorised individuals may collect pupils
- Where there is conflicting information, do not release the child until clarified
- Staff must follow recorded arrangements, not verbal disputes at the gate
- Staff must not attempt to mediate or resolve parental conflict

4. Authorised Collection Arrangements

- Schools must maintain an **up-to-date list** of authorised collectors for each pupil. These are initially identified within the admissions questionnaire for all new starters to the school
- Parents/carers must:
 - Provide names and contact details

- Notify the school of changes in advance where possible
- Same-day changes:
 - Must be confirmed by a parent/carer with PR
 - Should be communicated to the school

5. Managing Parental Disputes

5.1 Identification of a Dispute

A parental dispute is deemed to exist where:

- Two individuals with PR give conflicting instructions, OR
- A parent objects to a named authorised collector, OR
- The school becomes aware of family breakdown or disagreement affecting collection

5.2 Immediate Response

Where a dispute is identified:

- The school must:
 - Not release the pupil to a third party (e.g. grandparent)
 - Proceed in accordance with recorded, undisputed arrangements
 - Escalate to the DSL or senior leader if required

5.3 Collection Outcomes

Scenario	School Response
Parent with PR arrives	Child may be released (unless court order restricts this)
Third party authorised and no dispute	Child may be released
Third party authorised but disputed by another PR holder	Do not release
Conflicting parental instructions on same day	Do not release until clarified

6. Role of Third Parties (e.g. Grandparents)

- Grandparents and other relatives:

- Do not have automatic rights to collect a child
- Can only collect where:
 - They are formally authorised, and
 - There is no known dispute

Where a dispute exists, the school will:

- Decline release to the third party, regardless of one parent's consent

7. Escalation Procedures

If a dispute arises at the point of collection:

Staff must:

1. Keep the pupil safe on site
2. Inform the DSL / senior leader immediately
3. Contact the parent(s) with PR for clarification (where appropriate)

The school may:

- Delay release until safe resolution
- Seek advice from:
 - Regional Hub Director
 - Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead
 - Local Authority

The school will contact external agencies (e.g. police) only if:

- There is an immediate safeguarding risk
- There is a risk of harm or abduction

8. Court Orders and Legal Restrictions

- The school will act strictly in line with any court orders, including:
 - Child Arrangements Orders
 - Prohibited Steps Orders
 - Non-molestation orders
- Parents must:
 - Provide copies of relevant legal documentation

- Notify the school of any changes

Where parental disputes persist or escalate, the Trust reserves the right to require formal clarification through legal documentation before permitting any variation to collection arrangements.

9. Record Keeping

The school will:

- Maintain clear records of:
 - Authorised collectors
 - Parental instructions
 - Disputes and actions taken (child's CPOMS records)
- Ensure records are:
 - Accessible to relevant staff
 - Reviewed regularly

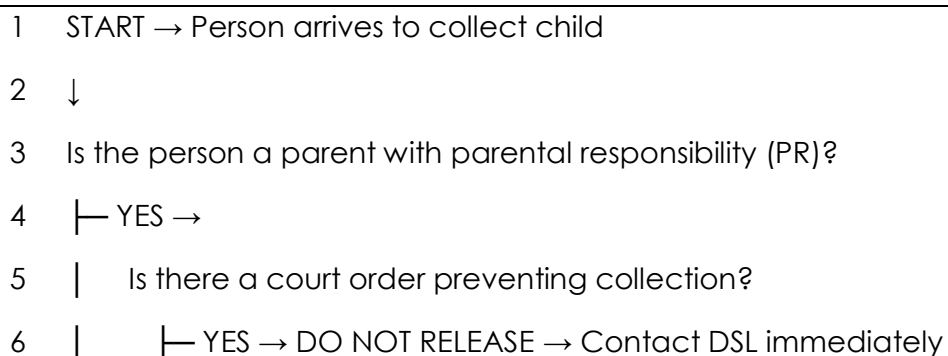
10. Expectations on Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must:

- Provide consistent and clear collection arrangements
- Resolve disputes outside of the school setting
- Inform the school of:
 - Any legal proceedings
 - Changes in family circumstances

Operational Flowchart – Collection in the Event of Dispute

Below is a staff-facing decision tool for office/admin/DSL use.



```

7 |      └─ NO → RELEASE child
8 |
9 |      └─ NO →
10 | Is the person on the authorised collectors list?
11 | └─ NO → DO NOT RELEASE → Contact parent/DSL
12 |
13 |      └─ YES →
14 | Is there a known dispute or objection from another PR holder?
15 | └─ YES → DO NOT RELEASE → Escalate to DSL
16 |      ↓
17 |      Keep child safe on site
18 |      Contact parents for clarification
19 |      Follow recorded arrangements only
20 |
21 |      └─ NO → RELEASE child
22 | END
23

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Enhanced DSL Escalation Flow (for complex cases)

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1 | Dispute identified →
2 | ↓
3 | Check school records (authorised collectors / court orders)
4 | ↓
5 | Is there clear, undisputed arrangement?
6 | └─ YES → Follow arrangement
7 |      └─ NO →
8 |      Do not release to third party
9 |      ↓

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- 10 Contact parents with PR (if appropriate)
- 11 ↓
- 12 Seek Trust/LA advice if unresolved
- 13 ↓
- 14 Consider safeguarding risk
- 15 └─ Risk present → Contact police / children's services
- 16 └─ No immediate risk → Hold child safely until collected by appropriate adult