**What to do if you have an abandoned child**

We have had a number of questions regarding abandoned children.

These are children being left in your setting after the end of their planned session.

The following guidance has been written to support you in these circumstances

* Have an abandoned child policy and ensure parents are aware of your procedures.
* Ensure you have up to date emergency contacts for all your children, parents often change contact numbers and forget to tell the setting. Some settings regularly write out to parents to update details.
* In the event of a **one off** emergency have discussions with parents (if possible) to agree action.
* Ensure that they are aware of any additional charges you may make.
* If parents / representatives cannot be contacted decide what is a ‘reasonable length of time’ to wait before taking further action. This may depend on your circumstances, e.g. staff commitments. Use your professional judgement.

**The following are suggestions for your procedure and have been agreed with social care.**

1. Try all contact numbers, emergency numbers and addresses you have. If practical send someone to the home to check if anyone is there.
2. Keep hold of the child as long as is ‘reasonably practical’ – use your professional judgement. It is much better for the child to stay in a familiar environment with familiar staff.
3. If you have welfare concerns and still cannot contact anyone, ring the police on 101, or 999 in an emergency situation. Let them know what you have already done to contact the parent and the time they should have been picked up.

The police are the only ones with power to remove a child; they will liaise with social care and may start proceedings if appropriate.

If a pattern starts to develop, or you have other concerns around the child please refer to social care and follow your safeguarding procedures.