



## **InterAct Uncollected Child/Young Person Policy, and Guidance on Use of Taxis, and on Young People Travelling Independently**

### **Statement of Intent**

After activities with InterAct, prompt collection of those children/young people who do not travel independently is vital for the safe and effective operation of our programmes.

We therefore encourage all parents/carers to leave reasonable time for their journey to collect their child, making allowances for traffic conditions.

When parents/carers arrive late, this will raise concerns with the young people, inconvenience staff and volunteers, it may impact upon other aspects of programme delivery, and it may delay other young people on their onward journeys with staff/volunteers, also inconveniencing them and their families.

Substantial and/or habitual lateness by parents/carers may be indicators of possible concerns in relation to the care and welfare of children, so records will be kept for safeguarding purposes.

Nevertheless, we accept that on occasions delays may be unavoidable, and we will always respond to these in ways which continue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all the children/young people in our care.

### **To minimise incidences of a child/young person not being collected promptly, we will always advise parents/carers of the following:**

- The planned end time of each activity, and the exact location for pick-up.
- Any changes in pick-up time or location, especially on longer trips, when the return time may be earlier or later than originally anticipated.
- Office and mobile phone contact details, to notify staff if they are running late.

Additionally, project staff will always have access to parents'/carers' home and mobile phone contact numbers for emergency use, as recorded on the registration/consent form.

### **Procedure - In the event of a child not being collected on time**

InterAct staff/volunteers will:

#### **1. Contact the parent/carer**

Depending on the circumstances, we will call the parent immediately or may allow 10-15 minutes leeway, if they have not called us.

If we cannot get through to the parent/carer, we will use the alternative telephone number/emergency number on the registration/consent form.

At least one suitable responsible adult, usually a member of staff, must remain with the child/ young person at all times, to keep them safe, and try to keep them calm.

When contacting parents/carers, or being called by them, we will discuss the reason for the delay, the parent's/carer's likely arrival time, and any other actions required to deal appropriately with the situation.

A firm but sympathetic approach to lateness will be adopted, recognising that this may occur for a variety of reasons.

If appropriate, alternative arrangements for the safe onward journey of a child/young person to their home, or to another suitable location, will be discussed and agreed with the parent/carer. Should that prove necessary, any additional costs incurred in doing so would usually be charged to the family.

## **2. Recording information**

When a situation of an uncollected child/young person occurs, which exceeds the 10-15 minutes leeway, we will complete an incident report detailing what occurred and the actions taken to resolve the situation. Note will also be taken on register sheets of any emerging patterns of lateness.

We will record how long we have waited, whether project staff were contacted by the parent/carer, or if they needed to contact the parents/carers to ascertain the situation. This information may be requested by Social Care.

## **3. Contacting Social Care and/or the Emergency Services**

If we are unable to contact anyone on the child's registration/consent form, then we will find a safe location to continue to wait. We will continue to call the numbers provided and wait with the child/young person until we receive a response, and agree with them what to do next.

If, after one hour, we have not succeeded in contacting a parent/carer or other named contact, we will consult with a manager before deciding whether to contact Social Care and/or the Emergency Services. This will be to find out any available information on the wellbeing of the parent/carer, and to agree with them the most appropriate course of action in order to continue to safeguard the child's safety and welfare. This might, in certain situations, result in the need for Social Care to arrange for suitable emergency care provision.

Discretion will be used, and any decision to contact Social Care and/or the Emergency Services will not be taken lightly. Should this situation arise, we will pass on all known parent/carer contact details. If possible, we will leave messages on the parents'/carers' answerphones/voicemails informing them of the situation and the action taken. Where feasible, a notice with all relevant contact details will also be left at the venue/pick-up point.

## **Guidance on use of taxis/minicabs**

If on any occasion (planned or unplanned) a young person is to be collected by a taxi or minicab, then their parent/carer should provide InterAct with details of the taxi/minicab company, the driver's name and the vehicle registration number.

## **Guidance on young people travelling to/from home independently**

InterAct supports and encourages young people, supported by their families, to develop the skills and confidence to travel independently, including journeys to and/or from InterAct activities, so they can engage more fully in their communities.

### **a) Planned independent travel**

Whether independent travel is to be a regular arrangement for a young person attending InterAct activities, or just a one-off, we would expect families to notify InterAct that the young person will be arriving at or departing from the activity alone, or with named other young person(s), so that we know it is safe to allow them to leave at the end of the activity, and any actions required in relation to this - e.g. the young person phoning/messaging their parent/carer when they arrive at the activity, or leave.

If circumstances arise that the arrangements for the journey home seem unsafe and/or inappropriate, e.g. because of an unexpected late finish, sudden inclement weather, unavailability of the usual public transport, or the young person feeling unwell or upset, then InterAct and/or the young person should contact the parent(s)/carer(s) to make arrangements for them to be collected instead.

### **b) Unplanned independent travel (in the event of parent/carer lateness)**

If a young person is expecting to be collected by a parent/carer, and the parent/carer is (or is likely to be) late in doing so, and the young person is known to be an independent traveller, then the option of an unaccompanied homeward journey can be discussed as a possible solution with the parent/carer.

When discussing this, it should be checked with both the young person and their parent/carer, that:

- The journey would be safe and reasonable at that time of day, in the current weather conditions, and that there would not be a lengthy wait for any public transport being used
- The young person is agreeable and confident about making that specific journey, and familiar with the route, including any public transport to be used
- The young person has with them:
  - appropriate clothing for the journey
  - sufficient money and/or a payment card for any travel fares
  - a working mobile phone for use should any further problems arise
  - a drink (if the weather is hot)

The young person should not be permitted to leave if there are concerns about any of these points. If the young person should not therefore travel home independently on that occasion, the Uncollected Child/Young Person procedures (pages 1 & 2) should be followed, as for other young people.