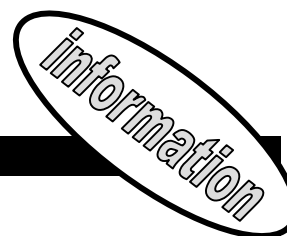



Bryan Slater
Director of Education

Distribution

To LEA Schools



The attached document is provided for your **information**:

ACTION	Title	Guidance for schools on the collection of pupils at the end of the school day		
	Summary of contents	Guidance for Schools		
	Associated documents			
	Date	6 th October 2003		
	Summary of action required			
	To be completed by			
	LEA Contact	Trevor Boore		01603 224001
	E-mail address	trevor.boore@norfolk.gov.uk		
	Norfolk Self Review reference	2 How well does the school care for its pupils?		
	Document reference	MI 209-03		

To Headteachers of all LEA Schools

Dear Colleague

Guidance for schools on the collection of pupils at the end of the school day

One or two concerns have recently been expressed about arrangements for the collection of pupils at the end of the school day. I thought, therefore, that it would be useful to confirm the current advice of the authority on this matter.

Under the principle of "in loco parentis", which literally means "in the place of a parent" a teacher is obliged to act as any reasonable parent when the child is in his/her care. This duty obviously extends to the school day, although there may be an argument as to the extent of the duty after school hours.

There is a great deal of caselaw which suggests that early release of children at the end of the school day may expose the school to liability for any incident that might befall the released child during the period of early release (even if this is only a couple of minutes). Depending on the age of the child, his/her condition and other circumstances, such as the situation of the school (ie busy roads etc), this may also mean that the school holds liability for any incident befalling a child released at the end of the school day.

Schools are advised to make parents aware of the requirement for collection at a specific time, by a specific person, but also to consider an internal policy dealing with the situation where a child is not collected on time. In the case of key stage one children and possibly even older, it would be prudent only to release children to a named individual, unless some other arrangement has been agreed in writing with the parent. If a parent does not attend within a reasonable time of school closing (say 10 mins), then the school should attempt to make contact with the parent to ascertain their whereabouts (there may have been an unforeseeable emergency incident). The availability of a mobile phone number would clearly be useful here. The child should be kept as safe as possible in the meantime. If a parent is persistently late, then the advice from Legal Services is that head teachers should seek a meeting with the parent to discuss the issue or attempt to resolve it by correspondence. It would not be appropriate to use the child to make a point to the parent about late collection (ie locking child out of school). If a parent fails to respond to requests about the collection of their child, then the school could advise the parent that a referral to social services may become appropriate.

Guidance on schools on the collection of pupils at the end of the school day

Whilst clearly the parent bears the responsibility to ensure their child is collected on time, the school does need to bear in mind carefully the risk to any child within its community of being sent out of school with no apparent means of collection.

Yours sincerely
Dr B Slater
Director of Education