

Walking To and From School Policy



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Policy on safeguarding children walking to and from school alone

“There is no law prohibiting children from being out on their own at any age. It is a matter of judgement for parents to decide when children can play out on their own, walk to the shops or school”. *Is it Legal? A parent's guide to the law*, the Family and Parenting Institute (June 2011)

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel. However, as a school, we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

In setting our protocol for collecting children, we have taken advice from the:

DfE, which states:

- It is for each school to decide and enforce its own pupil collection policy and request that parent/carers formalise collection arrangements in writing.
- The school is not responsible for a child's safety on his or her way home.

NSPCC, which states:

- Children under eight cannot judge the speed and distance of moving vehicles. They still need help when crossing roads.

All Pupils

- Permission and arrangements for children leaving the school at the end of the day will be confirmed in writing by the parent/carer.
- All children must be collected from After School Clubs by an adult unless written permission is given for the child to walk home.
- No adult other than those named will be allowed to leave the school with a child.
- In the event that someone else should arrive without prior knowledge, the school will telephone the parent/carer immediately and await their advice.
- If a child is to be collected before the end of the school day, the school is to be notified on the same morning.
- On arrival at school to collect the child the parent/carer will report to the School Office.
- The child will then be brought, by staff, to the reception to be taken home by the parent/carer
- If the person who normally picks a child up is not doing so then a note should be sent to school to inform us who is to pick up that day.
- Should arrangements change during the day the school should be contacted by telephone.
- If the parent/carer or alternative nominated adult is going to be late to collect their child, they should let the school know as soon as possible. We will keep children in school until their arrival.

Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from school on his or her own or be left unsupervised on the school premises either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above. Pupils will not be released to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements,

preferably in writing. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends on their maturity and confidence. Knowing that children under the age of eight can't judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles we expect Year 3 and 4 children to be brought to and collected from school by a responsible adult.

Walking Home Alone

We advise parents to think about whether their child is ready to walk to and from school and assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are many ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are driven to school do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they start to walk to school independently. Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. The best way to do this is to walk with your children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road. This helps them gain the experience and self-assurance to deal with traffic so that they can cross safely when they walk with friends or alone to school.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross at the intersection where there are traffic lights. Do not cross in the middle of the road. Alternatively, cross in a place where you can see clearly in all directions.
- Avoid parked cars or bends in the road.
- Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming and cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that drivers may not see a child, even if the child can see the driver.
- Remember that it is hard to judge the speed of a car so be cautious.
- Never, ever, follow someone who is either a stranger or someone they know but is not a designated "safe" adult. (A safe adult is someone who has been previously agreed upon by you and your child to be safe, such as a grandparent or trusted neighbour.) If that person tries to convince the child to go with him or tries to physically get close, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch and hit as hard as they can.

When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you might want to consider the following:

- Do you trust them to walk straight home?
- Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
- Are they road safety aware?
- Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
- Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
- Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they did not want to do (scream, shout, kick or fight)?

- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Would they know whom best to approach to get help?

If you are not confident about how your child would react, you should seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk on their own. If the parents of Year 5 and 6 pupils wish their children to walk home alone, the school must be informed of this in writing. If we have no written permission then the child must be collected from the playground.

Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be required to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

The following procedures will be followed for any child who is not picked up

- The child will remain with the class teacher for up to 10 minutes.
- After 10 minutes, the child will be taken to the School Office. The administrative team in the School Office will contact the parents by telephone.
- If other contacts are on the child's confidential sheet, they will be contacted.
- If no contact can be made with the emergency contact or parents the school will continue to try to make contact for a reasonable amount of time until 3.50pm, at the latest.
- After 3.50pm, if we have not been able to make contact, Social Services and/or the Police will be contacted for advice.
- Two members of school staff (which should include at least one Senior Member of Staff) will remain at school until Social Services and or the police make their decision as to whether it is a case of abandonment.
- The school will ensure that staff have followed these protocols and a note of all calls will be recorded in our safeguarding records.
- If a child is frequently not collected on time then school may view this as a safeguarding concern
- NO CHILD WILL BE LEFT ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES UNATTENDED.

The following procedure will be followed if an allegedly impaired person picks up any child:

- If the person picking up a child is, in the judgment of staff, impaired (under the influence of drugs or alcohol) and unable to adequately care for the child, the staff will not release the child to that person
- The child will be taken to the School Office and the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a Senior Leader will offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the person and child.
- If no contact can be made, Social Services will be contacted for advice.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE, PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET THE SCHOOL KNOW BY CONTACTING THE SCHOOL OFFICE OR INFORMING THE CLASS TEACHER.

Appendix 1

Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school

Name of Child: Class:.....

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on a regular basis.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the 'Policy on Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone'.

Signed: Date:

Print Name: