



Walking To and From School Alone Policy

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. A families' guide to the law states:

"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."

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel.

In addition, as a school we have a duty of care for the safety and well-being of our children and therefore this policy is to help advise parents/carers in the decisions they make for their children in relation to safety to and from school. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

School cannot be responsible for the welfare of children until they arrive at class, or when they have been dismissed from class at the end of a school day.

Pupils in Reception, KS1 and Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)

Our agreed school policy is that pupils in Reception, Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 **should NOT walk to or from school on their own** or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.

In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings who are on the school data form **provided they are 18 years old or above**. Pupils will **not** be handed over 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. If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity.

If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. After 5 minutes children will be sent to our after school club provision and parents/carers will be charged in line with the clubs fees.

If the child is not collected within 45 minutes and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we have a duty of care to refer to social services.

The primary driver in making such decisions is always the safety and well-being of our children.

Where it is not possible for an adult to bring or collect a child in Years 3 and 4, parents and carers may give consent for this duty to be carried out by an older sibling, providing:

- They are 15 and over;

- A parent/ carer judges them to be responsible enough to complete this task safely;

- The route to school is within a safe walking distance and the parent/carers judges the route safe;

- The parent/carers has completed the **Permission to walk to and/or from school with older sibling form (Appendix 2)**

- The older sibling and the child are going straight home;

- The older sibling is responsible for no more than two children.

If your child is attending an extra-curricular activities, then we request that all children attending these sessions are collected by an adult on time. Failure to collect children punctually from these activities could lead to an activity being withdrawn. **We also request that children attending breakfast club are brought to school and handed over to club staff.**

Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6

For pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, we believe that if children live within walking distance to school and are able to walk a safe route then you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone. If your child is attending an extra-curricular activity, then we request that all children attending these sessions are collected by an adult on time. Failure to collect children punctually from these activities could lead to activities being withdrawn. We also request that children attending breakfast club are brought to school and handed over to club staff.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school you should assess any risks associated with the route to school and assess your child's confidence. There are many ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. One way is to follow them a few times on their journey, so you know how safe and sensible they are. It is also strongly advised that children who are walking without an adult or older sibling, have a basic mobile phone that they are able to use if they need help. All mobile phones brought into school need to be switched off when entering school premises and handed into the classteacher immediately.

When deciding whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and/or from home you might want to consider the following:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight to school or straight home, using the agreed safe route?
2. Are there roads to cross on the route and how busy/safe are those roads?
3. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend or group of friends?
4. Are they road safety aware?
5. Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
6. Do they understand about keeping themselves safe and not to make any dangerous choices, either by themselves or with a group of friends?

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, please complete **Appendix 1**.

How to complete the form

- (1) Circle yes or no for each statement (please note that if you circle 'no' for any of the statements, your child may not be ready to walk to or from school.
- (2) Read the information and if you agree please sign and date if you want your child **to walk to school alone (Year 5 & 6 only)**.
- (3) Please hand the form into the office – for safeguarding purposes, the form needs to be submitted prior to any independent travel.
- (4) If at any time you need to change the arrangements, please ensure you let us know in writing.

You will receive a letter from school to confirm that we have received your permission form for your child to either walk to school alone, walk alone from school to home or both.

If your child is in Year 3 upwards and you would like an older sibling to bring or collect them from school, please complete **Appendix 2** form and return to school.

Appendix 1

Permission to walk to and/or from school alone – for Year 5 & 6

Child's name _____ Class: _____

- I consider the route to school is ***within safe walking distance*** **yes/ no**
- I consider the route to school to be a ***safe route*** **yes/ no**
- My child is aware of the potential dangers regarding roads/ traffic and how to avoid dangers and stay safe **yes/ no**
- My child understands stranger danger **yes/ no**
- I acknowledge that there may be other unforeseen risks **yes/ no**
- When walking home, a responsible person will be at home to supervise them **yes/ no**

Permission slip

Please tick relevant boxes

- ☐ I have read and understood this policy on safeguarding my child walking home from school alone.
- ☐ I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my child gets to and from school safely including getting to school on time. If circumstances change then I will communicate this with school.
- ☐ I fully understand that if they are at an extra-curricular activity/After School Provision they should always be collected by an appropriate person, or walk home/collection point if school have been advised.

Parents/Carers Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____