



Policy on safeguarding pupils when walking to and from school without adult supervision

Date of Policy:	1 st April 2024
Next Review date:	1 st April 2027
Signature:	
Date Approved:	TBC

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/Carers are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly; this includes independent travel. However, as a school we are responsible for the welfare of our children and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. Where a parent/carer makes the decision for their child to walk independently, the responsibility of the child's destination lies with the parent/carer as soon as they leave the school premises, for example, going to a park, going to a friend's house.

We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

Children in Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no child in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from school on his or her own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over children to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

Children 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 regarding who can collect your child/children. 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, they will be kept in school and parents/carers contacted. If the child is not collected and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we will consult with family services.

Children in Lower KS2 (Years 3 & 4)

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore as regards to children in LKS2 we believe that you as parents/carers need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility. We would still highly recommend that children in Years 3 and 4 are still brought to and collected from school. If you would like your child to walk to and from school, you must first discuss this with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). SLT will take into consideration the distance of school to home and also the maturity of your child.

Children in Upper KS2 (Years 5 & 6)

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 lots of 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, learning how to navigate and a host of other skills. This helps them gain the experience and confidence to deal with traffic and finding their way on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Walking home following an after-school club

During the winter months, when it is becoming dark in the evening, we would highly recommend that all children are picked up from school by an adult.

Going home with a friend/one off occasions

The above policy and procedures apply to all children walking home with no supervision, even if this is a one-off occasion. The form will need to be completed and the office informed.

Responsibility of younger siblings

As above, we highly recommend that children in FS, KS1 and LKS2 (Y4 and below) are dropped off and picked up to school by an adult. We therefore do not recommend that older siblings should have the responsibility of managing their younger siblings.

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; cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that drivers may not see them, even if they 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).

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

1. Do you trust them to walk straight home?
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
3. Are they road safety aware?
4. Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
5. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
6. Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

If you are not confident about how your child would react then you should seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk on their own. If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform the school by completing the form below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. Unless this arrangement is for every day of the week, we request, in writing, your schedule. Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. Should their behaviour be deemed a safeguarding risk, you will be asked to accompany them to and from school until they have demonstrated they can be trusted again.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE, PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.



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:

Address:

- 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 'policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone'.
- I understand that it is my responsibility and not the schools once my child has left the school premises.

Additional information:

Signed..... Relationship with child:

Name (printed)..... Tel.....

Date.....

**Please note, if not a daily occurrence, the specific dates need to be shared with the office.*

