



Walking home alone policy

As a school we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils at all times while they are on the school premises. While this responsibility does not extend to the journey to and from school we have produced this guidance to outline what we consider to be good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. The intention is to provide clarity to all parents and staff members, but it is also clear that we have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk, and an inappropriate journey to or from school may be an indicator of risk.

Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1 The school suggests that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to school on their own. As a result of this, the school will not let pupils of this age leave alone at the end of the school day. We will only hand over pupils to named adults and to older siblings provided they are 18 years old or above. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in the school to collect younger siblings. 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, preferably by email. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If this happens on a regular basis, the school inform the education welfare officer or Social Care.

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 upon their maturity and confidence. We would still highly recommend that pupils in year 3,4 and 5 at are still brought to and collected from school. It is your responsibility to see your child safely through the door of the school. (not just into the playground).

In Year 6 when deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. You must also ensure there is an adult at home to meet them as once they leave the school site they are no longer the responsibility of the school. Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. If you decide that your child will then also carry a mobile phone then be aware that these will need handing into school on arrival each day and will be locked away during the day.

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 way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older. 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/ 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 letter/email.

Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. 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 asked to accompany them or collect them until they have proved 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.

Be safe

Policy written November 2024