

POLICY ON PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. Parents by law need to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly - this doesn't mean they can't walk home independently. However, as a school we have a responsibility to keep our pupils safe and we must follow good practice. We also have to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child is in danger.

Pupils in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 (Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)

Our agreed school policy is that **NO PUPIL** in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 should walk to or from school on his or her own, either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above (however, if we think the older sibling isn't sensible enough, we will not hand the child over).

- Pupils will not be handed over to other adults not on the contact list. You can update the contact list at the school office. If someone turns up to collect your child and they are not on the list, 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. If the child is not collected and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we will consult with family services.
- We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings (must be 16 years or older).

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

We believe that pupils in year 3, and 4 should be still brought to and collected from school and this is our school policy.

For pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone. We will request written consent before letting your child go home alone. We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after-school club it may be dark when the club finishes.

Preparing Your Child To Walk Home Alone

There are many ways you can prepare your child to walk to and from school alone safely.

- check the route for any danger or hazards
- make sure your child feels happy and confident to walk on their own
- do a practice run through the route to build their confidence and
- check your child's road safety skills and awareness

Remember that **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.

When deciding whether your child is ready, think about:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight home?
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly 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 did not want to do?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know whom 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 its own.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, then you must inform the school by completing the consent slip. 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.

Other Things To Remember

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 and how to find their way. This helps them gain the experience and confidence to deal with traffic and find the way 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 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, go with a stranger or someone they know but is not a designated "safe" adult. Speak to your child about what they should do if this should ever happen.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after-school club it may be dark when the club finishes.

Where children walk to, or walk home from school, alone, we would usually expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive. If the child will be leaving from, or returning to, an empty house, we would expect that this is only for a short period of time and that the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS, PLEASE LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY.