

POLICY ON PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

There is no specific legal age at which a child may walk to or from school independently, nor is there a legally prescribed distance they may travel alone. Parents and carers must use their judgement, taking account of their child's maturity, confidence, the safety of the route and any individual needs. It is an offence to leave a child without appropriate supervision if doing so places them at risk.

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives an education and attends school regularly. This responsibility does not prevent a parent or carer from deciding that their child is ready to travel to and from school independently, provided the arrangements are safe and comply with this policy.

The school also has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils. We must follow appropriate safeguarding practice and take action if we believe that a pupil's safety or welfare may be at risk. This may include discussing concerns with the family, reviewing or withdrawing permission for independent travel, and making a referral to the relevant authority or safeguarding service where appropriate.

We are committed to working in partnership with pupils and their families to agree safe and appropriate travel arrangements. We recognise that gradually developing independence can help pupils build confidence, responsibility, road-safety awareness and practical life skills in preparation for the transition to secondary school.

Any decision about independent travel will therefore be made carefully and collaboratively, with the safety and best interests of the pupil remaining the school's primary consideration.

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

Under the school's agreed policy, **pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 must not walk to or from school without an appropriate adult**, either before or after the school day.

Pupils in these year groups will only be released to:

- a parent or carer;
- an adult named on the pupil's authorised contact or collection list; or
- an authorised sibling or family member aged **16 or over**.

The school reserves the right not to release a pupil if staff have safeguarding concerns about the person collecting them, even if that person is aged 16 or over. In these circumstances, the pupil's parent or carer will be contacted and the child will remain safely in school until suitable arrangements have been made.

Parents and carers are responsible for keeping the school informed of any changes to the people authorised to collect their child. The authorised contact and collection list can be updated through the school office.

If someone who is not listed as an authorised collector arrives to collect a pupil, the child will not be released until the school has contacted the parent or carer and verified the person's identity and permission to collect.

If nobody arrives to collect a pupil, the child will remain safely in school while staff attempt to contact the parent, carer or another authorised emergency contact. If the child remains uncollected and the school is unable to contact an appropriate adult, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the relevant children's or family services.

Pupils who attend the school are not permitted to collect younger siblings unless they are aged **16 or over**, have been authorised by the parent or carer, and the school is satisfied that the collection arrangement is safe and appropriate.

Key Stage 2 Pupils: Years 3, 4, 5 and 6

Pupils in Years 3 and 4

Under the school's agreed policy, pupils in Years 3 and 4 must be brought to school and collected by a parent, carer or authorised person.

Pupils in these year groups will not be permitted to leave school unaccompanied.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6

Parents and carers of pupils in Years 5 and 6 may decide whether their child is ready to take responsibility for walking to and from school independently.

Before a pupil is allowed to leave school unaccompanied, the school must receive written permission from their parent or carer. Until written permission has been received, the pupil must continue to be collected by an authorised person.

Permission for independent travel will be considered subject to:

- the pupil demonstrating appropriate behaviour, maturity and road-safety awareness;
- the parent or carer being satisfied that the pupil can travel safely and responsibly;
- the school having no safeguarding concerns about the arrangement; and
- the journey taking place during daylight and in safe conditions.

The school will not permit a pupil to walk home alone after dark or where staff believe that weather, local circumstances or another safeguarding concern may make the journey unsafe. In these circumstances, the school will contact the pupil's parent or carer to arrange collection.

Preparing Your Child to Travel Independently

Parents and carers should carefully consider whether their child is ready before giving permission for them to walk to or from school without an adult.

To help prepare your child, we recommend that you:

- plan and check the route for potential hazards;
- choose the safest route rather than simply the shortest route;
- walk the route together several times;
- practise the journey at the same time of day that your child will usually travel;
- check that your child understands how to cross roads safely;
- agree where your child may and may not go;
- make sure your child knows what to do if they feel worried, unsafe or unsure;

- identify safe places and trusted adults they could approach for help;
- agree what your child should do if their usual route is blocked or disrupted; and
- ensure that your child knows how and when to contact you or another trusted adult.

Children who usually travel by car may have had fewer opportunities to practise pedestrian and road-safety skills. Parents and carers should therefore make sure that their child has sufficient supervised experience before allowing them to travel independently.

Is Your Child Ready?

When deciding whether your child is ready to walk to and from school independently, please consider whether they:

1. can be trusted to follow the agreed route and travel directly between home and school;
2. will behave safely and responsibly, including when travelling with friends;
3. understand and consistently apply road-safety rules;
4. know what to do if they become lost, delayed or separated from a friend;
5. know how to respond if someone they do not know approaches them;
6. understand that they should never go anywhere with an unknown adult or accept a lift without your permission;
7. have the confidence to move away from a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable;
8. know how to attract attention and seek help in an emergency;
9. can identify appropriate people and safe places from which to ask for help; and
10. know what to do if their journey is affected by poor weather, roadworks or another unexpected event.

If you are unsure how your child would respond in any of these situations, you should carefully reconsider whether they are ready to travel independently.

Written Permission

If you decide that your child is ready to walk to and from school independently, you must notify the school by completing and returning the relevant consent form to the school office.

Once the consent form has been received, the school's **Designated Safeguarding Lead and Assistant Headteacher responsible for Years 5 and 6** will arrange to meet with the parent or carer. During this meeting, they will:

- discuss the school's Walking Home and Collection Permissions Policy;
- review the proposed arrangements and address any safeguarding concerns;
- ensure that the parent or carer understands their responsibilities;
- complete and sign the relevant permission form; and
- ensure that the agreed arrangements are recorded and updated on the school's management information system, **BromCom**.
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A pupil will **not** be permitted to leave school unaccompanied until this process has been completed and the written permission has been formally recorded by the school.

Parents and carers must inform the school immediately if there are any changes to the agreed arrangements or if they wish to withdraw permission. The school also reserves the right to review, suspend or withdraw permission if concerns arise about the pupil's safety, behaviour or readiness to travel independently.

Expectations for Behaviour

Pupils travelling independently are expected to behave safely and responsibly while on the school premises, on their journey, and when representing the school in the local community.

If the school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, maturity or safety, permission to leave unaccompanied may be suspended or withdrawn. The parent or carer will then be required to accompany or collect the pupil until the school is satisfied that independent travel can resume safely.

Arrival at Home

Where a pupil has permission to travel to or from school independently, the school would normally expect a parent, carer or other responsible adult to be at home when the pupil leaves for school and when they return home.

If a pupil will be leaving from or returning to an empty home, parents and carers must ensure that:

- the pupil will be alone for only a short and reasonable period;
- they are sufficiently mature and confident to manage safely;
- they can enter and secure the home safely;
- they know how to contact their parent, carer or another trusted adult;
- an appropriate adult is available to provide support in an emergency; and
- they understand what to do if they cannot enter the home, feel unsafe or need urgent help.

Parents and carers remain responsible for deciding whether these arrangements are safe and appropriate for their child. Any relevant information about the arrangements should be shared with the school during the permissions meeting.

If the school has concerns about a pupil's safety or the suitability of the arrangements, permission for independent travel may be reviewed, suspended or withdrawn until appropriate alternative arrangements are agreed.

Mobile Phones for Safety

Parents and carers may decide that their child should carry a mobile phone while travelling independently to and from school for safety and emergency contact purposes.

Mobile phone arrangements will be discussed during the permissions meeting. Parents and carers will be given a copy of the school's Pupil Mobile Phone Policy and will be required to sign a short mobile phone agreement before their child is permitted to bring a phone onto the school site.

The agreement will confirm that:

1. The pupil is responsible for looking after their mobile phone while travelling to and from school.
2. On arrival at school, the pupil must take their mobile phone directly to the school office. The phone will be stored securely in a locked drawer for the duration of the school day. At the end of the day, the pupil must collect their phone from the school office before leaving the premises.
3. The pupil is responsible for remembering to hand in and collect their phone independently. School staff are not responsible for reminding pupils to do so.
4. The pupil and their family are responsible for ensuring that the phone is fully charged. The school cannot provide chargers or charge pupils' phones during the school day.
5. Mobile phones must not be taken into classrooms. If a pupil takes their phone into class, whether accidentally or deliberately, they will receive one reminder. If this happens again, the phone will be retained securely by a member of staff and must be collected by a parent or carer from the school office.

6. Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day to make calls, send messages, take photographs or videos, access social media, or use any other applications. If a pupil uses their phone during school hours, the school will contact their parent or carer and arrange a meeting to review the pupil's permission to bring a mobile phone onto the school site.
7. Permission to bring a mobile phone to school may be reviewed, suspended or withdrawn if the pupil or family does not follow the conditions of the agreement or the school's Pupil Mobile Phone Policy.

Parents and carers should ensure that their child understands how to use their phone appropriately in an emergency. Carrying a mobile phone does not replace the need for a pupil to understand road safety, follow the agreed route, seek help from an appropriate adult when necessary, and act responsibly throughout their journey.

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