

Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Primary and Nursery School Walking/Cycling

To/From School Guidance for Parents 2021/22

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. However, as a school we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk. **Pupils in**

Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should 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 provided they are 14 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, preferably by letter. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

The Nursery has its own collection arrangements which are shared with parents.

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.

*Therefore as regards pupils in KS2 we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility. It is **recommended** that ONLY children in Years 5 and 6 be allowed to walk to school unaccompanied by an adult and only then if the parent/carer is confident*

that it is safe for them to do so. However individual cases will be discussed with parents/carers. 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. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to assess the route which the child will take when walking home from school to ensure they are confident their child has the ability to walk home safely (even if their child is accompanied to school by a parent/carer). Crossing busy mainroads and walking through secluded areas is discouraged. Please work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. Parents/carers make the informed decision accepting that they are legally responsible for their child's safety on their journey to and from school, even if they are not physically present.

Children may only cycle to school unaccompanied once they are in Y6 and have passed the "Bike-Ability" Level 2 Module. The bike must be road-worthy and appropriate safety gear used.

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.

Safeguarding is paramount and parents/carers need to ensure their child is fully aware of stranger danger and how to report any concerns to an appropriate adult.

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 friend/ neighbour). And if that person tries to convince them to go with them or tries to physically get close to them, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as they can.*

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 (scream, shout, kick or fight)?***
- 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.

It is also recommended that parents/carers ensure that their child knows their own home phone number and other emergency contacts and either has a mobile or money for a pay phone should they need to call home in an

emergency. Some mobile phones have a GPS tracking system and having an emergency ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in contacts is recommended. Any mobiles brought into school must be turned off as soon as on school premises, remain so during the day and be handed in to the class teacher for the duration of the day (however the school accepts no liability for lost or damaged phones).

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must complete the appropriate consent form available from the school office or website. Parents/carers should ensure that the consent form is completed/updated so that a register can be compiled in the office of key children to identify should a child not arrive at school at the appropriate time in the morning. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless permission has been given in writing. The cycle/walking home consent form must contain all emergency contact numbers and the parent/carer must notify the school and update the consent form in the event of any changes.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure their child arrives safely and promptly to school each morning. Whilst walking to school it is understood that parents/carers ensure that their child takes the safest route possible and is accompanied at all times by a responsible adult.

There must always be an appropriate adult/parent/carer at home to meet the child on their return home. Parents/carers need to be aware when walking home/cycling home the school will not know if a child arrives home as planned. Hence the parent/carer needs to ensure adequate safety protocols are in place should an emergency/accident arise.

If the school has concerns about a particular child's ability to travel safely or if a child lives too far away (more than 15 minutes away) permission for the child to walk home alone may be refused. In these cases the child will only be released into the care of a responsible adult.

If the school feels the welfare and safety of the child walking/cycling to school is or becomes compromised, the school may revoke the arrangement and will notify parents/carers accordingly and inform the appropriate authorities as necessary.

Attendance

It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that school is informed should their child be unable to attend school for any reason in accordance with the school attendance policy. If a child who walks/cycles to school unattended is not in school, contact will be sought with the parent/carer within 30 minutes of the school's protocol of morning registration taking place and an absence without reason being noted by the classroom staff.

If upon contact it is confirmed that a child has left home with the intention of walking/cycling to school but has not arrived and therefore an issue of a missing child is noted, the school will contact the police immediately. The school's designated senior person for safeguarding/child protection will then be immediately informed and safeguarding procedures for child protection/children missing procedures will be followed.

A register of children who have permission to walk/cycle home alone after the school day will be kept by the school.

If a child has left the school to walk home but does not arrive home when expected and direct contact with the child has not been established, the parent/carer should contact the school in the first instance to seek clarification from the responsible adult who dismissed their child as to the time they left school. However the school may not be contactable after hometime and therefore it will be parents/carers' responsibility to notify the police.

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 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. THANK YOU.

Please return to the school office.

CONSENT THAT MY CHILD MAY WALK/CYCLE TO AND FROM SCHOOL/HOME ALONE

I confirm that _____ who is in Year _____ at Scotforth St Paul's C of E Primary & Nursery School may walk/cycle* to school/home*from school alone. (*Delete as appropriate)

I confirm that I have read and understood the school's walking/cycling home alone guidance for parents (to be found on the school's website).

In the event of an emergency please contact:

_____ (PARENT/CARER)

Contact Number(s): _____

Or _____ (Name/Relationship to child) on _____

I will notify the school immediately of any changes to the emergency contact details. I understand the school may revoke this consent if child safety is compromised (for example by there not being a responsible adult at home to look after the child/ren upon their return.).

Signature

Name:

Dated: