

SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School

Policy for the Drop-off and Collection of Pupils



Our Mission

‘At SS John and Monica’s we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other’

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to create a robust approach to safeguard the pupils in our care, both before and after school, as far as reasonably and practically possible. The safety of the children is paramount.

This policy is in place to ensure that the responsibilities and expectations of all parties are clear regarding children entering and leaving the school premises. The beginning and the end of the school day are very busy times, and our aim is to ensure children are dismissed carefully, under strict supervision, collected on time and arrive home safely.

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we aim to resolve the situation as quickly as possible and cause as little distress to the child as possible. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be aware of procedures being followed.

Rationale

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In addition, those bodies must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in considering what arrangements they need to make for the purpose of that section.

Safeguarding arrangements will include consideration of the procedures for dealing with children who are late to be collected or are not collected at the end of a school day/ authorised school activity, and where the Governing Body or Proprietor retains responsibility for the use of school premises. It also applies where staff have concerns about the effectiveness of care by the person collecting the child and the impact this has on the child's safety outside of school, in line with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES, 2012) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF, 2018).

Other legislation relevant to this guidance:

- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 1989
- Children and Young Persons Act 1933, Occupiers liability Acts 1957 and 1984

This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the current SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Governors: ensure that this policy is reviewed in a timely manner, either before the review date stated in the policy or before if legislation changes

sooner.

- Head teacher/ SLT: ensure that the policy is adhered to by all stakeholders
- Office Manager: ensure that the policy is reviewed as required and that office staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of this policy.
- Office Staff: ensure accurate record keeping, as detailed later in this policy.
- Class teachers: ensure that any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children before or after school are reported promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL
- Parents /Carers: ensure that they communicate effectively with the school with regard to contact details and arrangements for the care of their child before and after school as necessary.

Supervision before and after school

There is no set legal age at which children can walk to and from school independently or be left alone. It is, however, an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk; therefore, schools have a continuing obligation to alert relevant authorities if they believe this is the case. This could, theoretically, include the school journey.

The NSPCC advise the following:

- Learning to be independent is an important part of growing up. Between work, appointments and other family commitments. Every parent will have to leave their child home alone at some point, so it's good to have a plan in place. Every child is different, so build up their independence at their own pace and check in with them to make sure they feel safe.
- Infants and young children aged 0-3 years old should never be left alone, even for 15 minutes, while you pop down the road. This applies not just to leaving them home alone, but also to leaving them in your car while you run into the shops.
- While every child is different, we wouldn't recommend leaving a child under 12 years old home alone, particularly for longer periods of time.
- Children in primary school, aged 6-12, are usually too young to walk home from school alone, babysit or cook for themselves without adult supervision. If you need to leave them at home, it's worth considering leaving them at a friend's house, with family or finding some suitable childcare
- Keep talking to your child. Whether they're 12 or almost 18, there might be reasons they don't feel safe alone in the house. Just because your child is older doesn't necessarily mean they are ready to look after themselves or know what to do in an emergency. It can help to go over the ground rules and remind them how to stay safe at home.
- Remember – you should never leave a child home alone if they don't feel ready, or if you don't feel they're ready. Sometimes it's just better to leave them with someone – particularly if they're nervous or have complex needs.

Schools are only responsible for safety on the school journey where they have specifically arranged transport.

Walking to and from school independently

If parents/carers choose to let their child travel to/from school independently, they will be responsible for assessing the risks associated with the school route and their child's confidence.

Parents/carers of a Year 6 pupil can submit written consent for their child to access the school independently. If parents/carers of a child in Year 5 would like their child to access school independently, they will be required to meet with the school or have a telephone discussion with the school to discuss their individual needs and gain school authorisation.

Parents are required to work with their children to build their independence by walking to and from school together, through route-finding, road-safety skills, and general awareness. The most important factor is to consider whether the child can walk to/from school alone and whether the child is exposed to any risks.

School policy for children to walk home independently is that:

- Children must be in year 6 and have written consent.
- Any child in year 5 must have authorisation from school and written consent from a parent with parental responsibility.
- It is the parents' responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order that they may make an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing fast roads and walking through secluded areas is discouraged. A single route must be agreed.
- Parents must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently happy that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey safely.
- Children should preferably walk in a group and not alone.
- Children should know their home phone number (plus one other emergency contact) and either have their own mobile phone or money for a phone box.
- There must be someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- Any child must be capable of arriving home within 30 minutes of the end of the school day. Journeys of 30 minutes or more are not considered appropriate for children at this stage. The same applies for children being

collected from extra-curricular activities.

- **During winter months (Between October half-term and February half-term), no child can walk home from an after-school club. All children must be collected, due to it being dark**

Drop off and collection by older siblings

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person if it is not safe for the child to walk home unsupervised. There is no minimum age set by law for a young person to remain in charge of another child; it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. This can include the care of an older sibling if the level of supervision is 'likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (Children and Young Persons Act, 1933). Therefore, parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that will go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

The suitability of those aged 16 years or above caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis, by a judgment of the potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected; the length and nature of the journey home, and the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the NSPCC recommend that no one under 16 should be left to care for a younger child.

SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School Policy for children to be collected:

- Children in the Early Years (Reception) and KS1 (Y1 and Y2) must be collected by someone aged 16 and over.
- Children in Y3 to Y6 must not be collected by anyone below the age of 14 (with written consent).

If we have any concern that any person is not competent to bring/collect children to/from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements; this will be raised with the parent and a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services if necessary.

Parent/carers' ability to offer safe care

If the school has a concern that the parent/carer is using drugs/alcohol and therefore may not be able to provide safe care for their child/children, the school will speak with the parent/carer to inform them of the concerns. A Designated Safeguarding lead will be notified, and they will speak with the parent/carer to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child. However, if the extent of a parent's own needs means that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to Birmingham Children's Trust will be made.

If an adult without parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their appearance suggests they are unable to provide safe care, collection will be refused. A parent with parental responsibility will be contacted and required to collect their child from school.

The school will aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of the Police and Children's Services, but schools do not have the authority legally to retain a child against a parent/carer's will. If a parent/carer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol and takes the child/children offsite the school will ring for a Police welfare check.

Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop-off and collection will apply to extended school activities. Safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL, who will decide on the appropriate response.

Late Collection (Read in conjunction with Late Collection Policy)

We do not expect any child to be collected late. All children are expected to be collected at 3.20 pm. If a parent/carer is delayed for any reason, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to call an authorised adult to collect the child/children from school on their behalf. The school office will not make these calls.

Children not collected by 3:35 pm will be placed in our after-school care, and an emergency care charge will be applied (£3.50 per 15 mins)

SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School will:

- Check for any information about changes to the normal collection routines
- Attempt to contact the parents/carers at home/work/mobile phone.
- Attempt to telephone emergency contacts
- Keep a record of incidents where parents/carers are late
- Send a letter home to the parent/carer notifying them of the possible arrangements that may be put into place for their child if they continue to collect their child late, and invite parents in for a discussion about their circumstances if applicable.

Please note that late collection 3 times will result in the after-school place being withdrawn

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility (including siblings, if appropriate and in line with school policy), whether this is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent/carer must inform the school. In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent/carer must give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home.

Concerns about the child's safety and welfare arising from late collection will be dealt with in accordance with SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Parents will be informed that in the event that their child is not collected from school by an authorised adult and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty-five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures, ie Police will be informed, and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made.

The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the actions taken and calls made, and under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them. A letter will be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put in place for their child and inviting them to a discussion about their individual circumstances. Once the situation has been resolved, it is important to establish how and why it arose and to ascertain whether there is anything we could reasonably do to prevent a recurrence. It may be necessary to discuss with the parent the steps they could take to avoid recurrence, e.g., ensuring we have current contact details. It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure they worked smoothly and, if necessary, amend them for future incidents.

Special arrangements

If parents/carers are unable to drop off and collect their child in accordance with this policy, they must attend a face-to-face meeting with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher. The purpose of the meeting will be to explore their individual needs and alternative arrangements. The school will review each case on an individual basis and ensure any alternative drop-off and collection arrangements are assessed in line with the child's suitability and safety.

Feb 2026
Review: Feb 2028

Appendix 1

Walking to and from school

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis.

I confirm that my child is suitable to walk home, knows how to keep him/herself safe and is able to deal with emergencies.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the Drop Off and Collection Policy.

I can confirm I have parental responsibility.

I understand that this is my own decision and that the school is not responsible for my child once they have been released.

Child's Name _____ Class _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____