

Walking Home Alone Guidance

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly. This does not disallow independent travel. As a school, we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils and therefore must 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. There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school.

We have taken advice from the following:

Department for Education states:

- It is for each school to decide, and enforce, its own pupil collection policy and request that parent/carers formalise collection arrangements in writing.
- The school is not responsible for a child's safety on their way home.

NSPCC states:

- Children under eight can't judge the speed and distance of moving vehicles. They still need help when crossing roads.

Procedures

Pupils from Foundation Stage to Year 4

All children from EYFS up to and including Year 4 must be brought to and collected from the school site by a named adult or sibling who is older than 13 years of age.

Older brothers or sisters in school should not bring or collect younger siblings.

No-one other than named people will be allowed to collect unless school has been contacted in advance, with a password system in place. If staff are unsure of collection arrangements, they will have to check with the school office which will delay collection.

Pupils in Years 5 & 6

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own as it very much depends on their maturity and confidence. In order to increase independence, children in Years 5 & 6 are permitted to walk home alone with permission from their parents or carers.

We know that it can be busy at the end of the school day in the vicinity of the school, and unfortunately there are no pedestrian crossings in the area for children to be able to cross the roads safely. When families are considering allowing their child(ren) to walk home alone, they must ensure the children know how to cross roads safely and be trusted on their journey. Mobile phones are permitted in Years 5 & 6, therefore these can also be considered as part of the child's safety plan.

Preparing children to walk to and from school.

We teach children about keeping themselves safe in PSHE and other curriculum areas. When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility consider the following:

- Are they road safety aware? Do they know the safe places to cross? Do they know what to look out for when walking near school? (Other pedestrians and road users including cyclists.)
- Do you trust them to walk straight home?
- Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
- Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
- Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Would they know who best to approach to get help? Some children walk to meet a parent away from school. Do they know what to do if the parent is not there? (Returning to school is likely the best option.)

If you and your child feel confident that they are ready to walk home or to an agreed meeting place, please inform school using the consent form on Arbor. If you want to update the details at any point, contact the school office.

Parents/carers of children who wish their children to walk home unescorted by an adult must follow these guidelines:

- Children must be in Year 5 or 6.
- It is the parents/carer's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home to assess whether this is a safe route.
- Parents/carers must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of road safety and stranger danger. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure they are happy that their child can take the proposed journey safely. They must consider weather conditions and darkness during the winter months.
- There should be someone at home to meet the child on arrival.
- If a child does not arrive within the agreed timescale, parents/carers must immediately notify school so we can take appropriate action, which may include contacting the police.

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