



CHILDREN WALKING HOME FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY

'With Jesus as our guide; we live, love and learn together.'

INTRODUCTION

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. A parent's 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.' *Is it Legal? A parent's guide to the law' by the Family and Parenting Institute (June 2011)*

Parents are legally obliged to ensure that 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 his or her 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** (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

We do not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

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 someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, 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 within 30 minutes and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we will consult with children's services and / or the police (as appropriate).

PUPILS IN KS2 (YEARS 3, 4, 5 AND 6):

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk home from school on their own, we believe that pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 should be brought to and collected from school by parents / other designated adult and this is our school policy.

With regard to pupils in Year 6, a parent / other designated adult should still bring pupils in Y6 to school; however, we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking home from school alone.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk home from school you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. Work with your child should take place to build up independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are many ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. 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.

You should teach your child these road safety guidelines:

- 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. Speak to your child about what they should do if this should ever happen.

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 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 request permission for them to walk home from school on their own.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must request permission from the school by completing the slip below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this slip has been completed and the school has **approved** this request in writing.

Your child will also be responsible for their own behaviour whilst on the school premises both after school and on their journey home (as they are wearing our school uniform and they are representing our school's expectations and values).

Should any pupil's behaviour walking home from school not be acceptable then the parent will be asked them to accompany or collect them until it is established by the headteacher that they can be trusted again.



Parents of children who wish for them to walk home unescorted by an adult at the end of the school day (3.15pm) must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Parents should have completed the permission slip and received confirmation from the school (in writing) that their child is permitted to **walk directly home** from school at the end of the day.
- Children should be in Year 6.
- It is the parent’s 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 of fast roads, walking through secluded areas and loitering e.g. around any shops is to be discouraged. A single route must be agreed.
- Parents should be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger. It is parent’s responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently happy that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey safely.
- During winter months and/or inclement weather, children shall be dressed appropriately.
- Children should preferably walk in a group and not alone.
- Children should know their home phone number (plus one other emergency contact).
- There should 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 (3.15pm). Journeys of over 30 minutes are not considered appropriate for children to walk at this stage.
- Pupils are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school if they are **walking home from school** alone. This must be handed in at the school office on immediate arrival at school and collected from the school office at 3.15pm. The use of mobile phones in school is prohibited. The school **does not take any responsibility** for the loss of / or any damage to mobile phones brought to school by pupils.
- If at any time there is a change to any **walking home from school** arrangements for my child then I will inform the school in writing immediately.

Name of Pupil:		Year Group:	Six
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I wish to seek permission for my child to **walk home from school** on regular basis.

I have read the guidance above and I am fully compliant with this.

I will notify school immediately should this arrangement change.

I fully understand that once I have requested and received permission for my child to **walk home from school alone**, the school is not responsible for my child’s actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.

Signed:	
Name (print):	
Date (d/m/y):	