

## Walsden St Peter's Primary School

### Policy on Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone.



There are no laws around age or distance of walking or cycling 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.

In setting our policy for collecting children we have taken advice from the following:

DfE, that 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 his or her way home.*

NSPCC, that states:

- *Children under eight can't judge the speed and distance of moving vehicles. They still need help when crossing roads.*
- *There's no law about a babysitter's minimum age, but we recommend using someone who is 16 or above. Younger babysitters may not be mature enough – or have the authority – to be in charge.*

#### **Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.**

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 KS1 pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 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. 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.

#### **Pupils in 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 on their maturity and confidence. Knowing that children under the age of eight can't judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles we expect Year 3 and 4 children to be brought to and collected from school. We expect all children to be collected from afterschool clubs, particularly in winter when light is fading.

#### **Walking home alone**

We advise parents to think about whether your child is ready to walk to and from school and assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence.

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. Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

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 together 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 self-assurance to deal with traffic and way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross at designated crossing points, such as a zebra crossing, a lollipop lady/man or 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 a "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 neighbour).

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?
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. Further advice and guidance for parents and carers from the NSPCC can be found at the following:

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/leaving-child-home-alone/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/leaving-child-home-alone/)  
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/out-alone/>

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

If you decided that your child is able to travel alone, they will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. Should their behaviour be deemed a safeguarding risk you will be asked to accompany them until they have demonstrated they can be trusted again.

**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied**

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school.

Name of Child: .....

Class: .....

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis.  
I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the  
'Policy on Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone'.

I understand that it is my responsibility and not the schools once my child has left the school premises.

Additional information :
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Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....