

Safe Collection Policy and Walking to and from School Alone

Autumn 2026

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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, Key Stage One and Years 3 and 4

Our agreed school policy is that **no pupil in Foundation Stage, Key Stage One, Year 3 or Year Four** should walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on school premises either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above. Parents are asked to name the individuals who are allowed to collect their child on the data collection sheet provided each September.

Pupils will not be handed over to other individuals 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, by letter or email. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups children will be kept in school and parents contacted, if parents can't be contacted appropriate action will be taken. This could include contacting another member of the family to collect the child. We may complete a home visit to see if an adult or person able to collect the child is at home. If we are unable to make contact any emergency contacts, then Children's Social Care or the Police will be contacted. We will not allow older brothers and sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

It is the policy of the school that children can only be collected during the school day by a person who is 16 or above. Any requests from parents to allow someone younger than 16 to collect must be made in writing to the head teacher. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

If staff feel that a parent/carer person collecting a child may be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs and the safety and wellbeing of the child may be compromised, they will contact a member of the Safeguarding team or Senior Leadership Team. They will assess the situation and if they feel that the parent/carer, person collecting the child appears unable to take responsibility for the child they will take appropriate action. This could include contacting another member of the family to collect the child. If another family member is not available, then Children's Social Care or the Police will be contacted.

Relationship breakdown of parents/guardians

The school has a clearly defined procedure, which is followed in the event of the relationship between a child's parents/carers breaking down. Unless there is a court order, of which school must have a copy, preventing one parent's contact to the child we are unable to deny access.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6

There is no set age when upper KS2 children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It is dependent upon the individual child's maturity and confidence. Therefore, as regards pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.

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 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.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.

- Always cross where there are traffic lights or zebra crossings, 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 use a mobile phone whilst crossing a road
- 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 neighbour). And if that person tries to convince him to go with him or tries to physically get close to him, 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)?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

Please note that in line with KCSIE 2026 school does not permit children to have mobile phones in school. Requests from parents for children to be allowed one so that they can walk home alone will not be granted.

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.

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.