

Walking To and From School Alone Policy



**‘Learning for life,
building a firm foundation’**

Reviewed: September 2024

Headteacher: Lisa Harrison

Aims of our Walking to and from school alone Policy

At All Saints, we believe that our vision, *Learning for life, building a firm foundation*, is vitally important in terms of walking to and from school alone. This is because children need firm foundations on which to build in all aspects of their lives. In the case of this policy, if a parent/carer considers their child to be responsible and wishes for them to walk to and / or from school alone we will agree for them to do so upon receipt of signed consent.

There are no laws around age or distance for 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 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 Early Years Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Early Years 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.

Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4

Whilst there is no set age when children are ready to walk to or from school on their own, we believe that pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 should be still brought to school and collected from school by a named adult or older sibling. This is our school policy.

Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6

When deciding whether your Year 5 or Year 6 child is ready to walk to school alone, you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. You should work with your children to build up their independence whilst 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. 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 route 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 using designated crossing areas, where they are available. 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 pedestrians, 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 allow them to walk on their own. If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, then you must inform the school by completing the reply slip below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

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 them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after-school club, it may be dark when the club finishes. You will need to make arrangements for your child to be collected.

Where children walk to school, or walk home from school, alone, we would usually expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive. If the child will be leaving from, or returning to, an empty house, we would expect that this is only for a short period of time and that the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.

All Saints CE Primary School and Nursery
Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied

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

Name of child: _____ Year: 5 / 6 (please delete as applicable)

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 'Policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone'.

I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to and from school alone, the school is not responsible for my child's actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.

Signed _____ Date: _____

[Print Name] _____