



SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY

Adopted by the Governing Body of Dunkirk Primary School:

Approval: Head Teacher July 2023

Review: July 2025

To be reviewed by: Heidi Hollis & Maria Atingstoll

Committee responsible: P&PC

Introduction

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to or from school. Parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that should go wrong in their absence. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents also recommends that no-one under the age of 16 should be left to care for a younger child.

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.

Foundation Stage and year 1/2/3/4

School has agreed that children up to and including Year 4 will not be released by staff to walk from home to school or from school to home on their own. Children in those year groups should not be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school by a parent/carer. This includes parents not dropping children off at the school gates for the child to enter school on their own. In addition we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above and pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has **been informed by the parent** that they have made this arrangement. If no one turns up to collect a child, they will be kept in school and parents/carers contacted. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect or deliver younger siblings.

Year 5&6

Walking home alone depends upon maturity and confidence. Therefore, as regards pupils move through KS2 we believe that parents need to decide whether their child is ready for this responsibility, due to their level of maturity and understanding of danger.

In deciding whether a child is ready to walk to/from school parent/carers should assess any risks associated with the route and the child's confidence. They would need to work with their child to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

If school is partially open due to a government restriction then all Y5/6 will need to be accompanied to and from school by an over 16 year old (agreed with school).

There are lots of ways parent/carers can prepare a 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 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.

Parent/carers should teach their child to:

- 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. (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 a child is ready for this responsibility parents/carers 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 and the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
5. 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 or fight)?
6. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
7. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

If a parent/carer is not confident about how their child would react, then they should seriously consider whether they should allow them to walk on their own.

If parent/carers decide that their child is ready for this responsibility, then they must inform the school by completing the slip below. A child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. Each child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. **Should their behaviour not be acceptable parent/carers will be asked them to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again. Y5 and 6 children should not be alone on school premises before 8:35am or after 3:25pm at Highfields campus (unless they are in a supervised after school activity/club). Times may be adjusted in a partial closure/national restrictions.**

IF AT ANY TIME THERE NEEDS TO BE A CHANGE IN ARRANGEMENTS MADE, PARENT/CAERS SHOULD ENSURE THEY LET USCHOOL KNOW IN WRITING BY LETTER OR EMAIL IMMEDIATLEY.

Dunkirk Primary School

**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied in Year 5/6
Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school**

Name of child:

Year:

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 school policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone.

Signed..... Date: (d/m/y)

(Name print).....

Relationship to child.....