



Walking to and from school policy

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Document Control

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4	July 2025	Reviewed and updated policy	I Webb

Approval		
Meeting	Date	Chair
FGB	15.07.2025	Wilma Hyde

Introduction

The purpose of the policy is to keep all children safe, but also to enhance a child's independence in walking to and from school, preparing them for secondary school and adulthood.

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.

What is considered walking to and from school independently?

A child is considered to be walking to or from school on their own if they arrive at or leave the school premises without being accompanied by a responsible adult. This includes walking down the school steps, along the school path, and crossing the road with the assistance of the school crossing patrol.

If a child is not met at the school gates by a parent or carer, and instead makes their way home independently, this will be regarded as walking home alone.

Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 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. Therefore, as regards pupils in Key Stage 2 we believe that you as parents, need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility. We would expect that children in years 3, 4, and 5 are still brought to and collected from school, and it is only Year 6 pupils who are allowed to walk independently to school if you feel they are ready to do so.

We encourage parents and carers to collect their children from school whenever possible, as this strengthens the connection between home and school. These informal, day-to-day interactions with class teachers allow for quick conversations that can address small concerns before they grow into larger issues requiring formal meetings.

We believe that having more regular face-to-face contact on the playground fosters a stronger sense of community and belonging. It also helps parents stay informed about what their children are learning and the changes taking place in school.

Important Reminder: Safe Use of the School Path

Please ensure that all children walk down the school path and steps when arriving at or leaving school, especially if they are using scooters. Children who have been given permission to travel to school independently must also follow this rule.

If a child is arriving on a scooter, it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure they are walking their scooter down the path and not riding it through the school car park or down the drive. The school cannot take responsibility for supervising this.

If you have a pushchair or mobility issues, you can also walk up via the path and across the car park, rather than using the steps.

⊘ No child should be walking, running, or riding a scooter or bike down the school drive. If this behaviour is observed, we will request that the child be collected from school by a responsible adult going forward.

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 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 wayfinding 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 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.
- Use the school crossing patrol.
- 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.

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, and fight)?
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 children 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 letter or by completing the 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.

The school crossing patrol will be present at the bottom of the school drive to help adults and pupils to cross between 8.30am to 9.05am and 3.15pm to 3.45pm.

Pupils should cross and access school through the steps onto the playground. Gates are opened at 8.40am, locked at 8.55am when school starts, and opened again at 3.25pm. Pupils should stay on the path and use the crossing patrol. Children should walk up the steps straight into class.

If a child arrives after 8:55am, when the gate to the playground is closed they must walk up the steps and across the carpark carefully and enter school through the office. To ensure there are no moving cars at this time, cones will be placed on the entrance to the school drive so cars cannot arrive or leave between the times of 8:40 to 8:55 am and 3:25-3:40pm

If a pupil attends an after-school club/activity they must be collected by a responsible adult from the school reception, and walk out of school using the main path. **They will not be allowed to walk home on their own under any circumstances.**

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING VIA THE SCHOOL OFFICE EMAIL OR CALL THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY. **PLEASE DO NOT MESSAGE ON CLASS DOJO MESSAGE AS THESE CAN NOT BE CHECKED BY THE TEACHER DURING THE DAY BECAUSE TEACHERS ARE TEACHING.**

Accessibility and Mobility issues

If you or your child has mobility issues, please speak to us, so we can make a more bespoke arrangements to meet yours or your child's needs. We want to work together to ensure we are an accessible school site as well as making sure you child is being kept safe. Arrangements could be collected from school later to reduce the number of people leaving or entering the site, to being collected and dropped off at the reception and driven up by car.

Missing Pupils

If any child does not arrive home within the agreed-upon timeframe, parents must immediately notify the school so that the appropriate action can be taken.

- If any child does not arrive home within the agreed timeframe and direct contact with the child has not been established by either school or parents, the school will instigate the missing persons procedure in conjunction with the relevant authorities and contact the police.

- If the missing person procedure is initiated, there must be a point of contact remaining at both the home and school location until further advised by the relevant authorities.
- If your child does arrive home after the missing person procedure has been instigated, immediate notification to the relevant authorities/emergency services must be made. This is to enable the missing person procedure to be stood down.
- Once the missing person procedure is initiated, responsibility will pass to the relevant authority to further any enquiries. Both parents and the school will be guided by them in order that a successful outcome is achieved.

If your child is in Year 6 and you wish to give permission for your child to walk to and from school unaccompanied, please complete and return via email to the school office on office@wirksworth-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk

If you wish for your Year 6 child to walk home from the first day of school in September we will need to receive the notification before this

**** Please note we will need 5 working school days to action any changes to a child walking home on their own. ****

Name of child:

- I confirm that my child is in Year 6.
- I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school regularly on their own.
- I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.
- I understand it is my responsibility to ensure that my child is walking home safely and sensibly.
- I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the "Walking to and collection from school policy."
- I understand that even if I have allowed my child to walk home after school, I will need to collect them from the school reception if they attend an after-school club/activity.

Signed

Print name

Date