



# Northstead Community Primary School

## Seek to Learn

### Safeguarding Pupils Walking To and From School Alone – September 2023

#### **Walking Home Alone Guidance and Procedures**

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to 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 protocol for collecting children we have taken advice from the following:

- DfE states that:
  - 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 their 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.

#### **Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1 (Years 1 & 2)**

All children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 must be brought to and collected from the school site by a named adult or sibling, provided they are aged 14 years old or above.

We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to bring or collect younger siblings.

#### **Pupils in KS2 (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 Year 4 children to be brought to and collected from school by a named adult or sibling, provided they are aged 14 years old or above.**

Parents/carers of children who wish their children to walk home unescorted by an adult must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Children must be in Year 5 or 6.
- It is the parents/carer's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order to make an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing of fast roads, walking through secluded areas are to be discouraged. A single route must be agreed.
- Parents/carers must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of road safety and stranger danger. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently happy that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey safely.
- There should be someone at home to meet the child on arrival.
- If a child does not arrive home within the agreed timeframe, parents/carers must immediately notify the school so that appropriate action can be taken, which may include contacting the emergency services.

The school must be informed by parents/carers completing the return slip (attached) if they wish their child to walk home. Pupils will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

Pupils must also be responsible for their behaviour at all times, this includes before and after school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable they will be asked to be accompanied or collected by parents/carers until they have proved they can be trusted again.

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.
- Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming and cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that drivers may not see a child, even if the child 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.) If that person tries to convince the child to go with him or tries to physically get close, 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:

- Do you trust them to walk straight home?
- Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
- Are they road safety aware?
- Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
- Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
- 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)?
- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Would they know who best to approach to get help?

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Appendix A – Walk Home Alone permission letter **YEAR 5 AND 6 ONLY**

**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied at the end of the normal school day. This does not apply to after school clubs.**

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'.*

Signed: .....

Relationship to the child.....

Date: .....

Are there any further details you wish to share with us about your child's walking home alone routine?

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