



## Walking Home Alone Policy

Little Ealing Primary School

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| Author of policy    | Emily Caldwell |
| Policy owned by     | Governing Body |
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## Introduction

Parents take full and due responsibility and care to ensure their child arrives safely at school each morning. When children walk to school, it is understood by the school that parents ensure that their child takes the safest route to school and that they are accompanied to school by a responsible adult. Parents are advised to talk to children about road safety even if children are accompanied to school by an adult. In Year 6, parents may decide that their child can walk to or from school without an adult, particularly if they live close to the school and do not need to cross any major roads. The following guidelines set out the school's advice, policy, and procedures should parents consider allowing their child to walk to or from school without an adult.

### Walking to School Without an Adult

There are no laws around the age or distance of walking to school. However, 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."

However, 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, and therefore we have developed our school policy regarding this matter.

Our local safeguarding context must also be considered when advising parents and setting policy. For example, our local safeguarding context demonstrates an increase in knife crime and muggings of children for their mobile phones.

Therefore, our agreed school policy is that only pupils in Year 6 will be permitted to walk to and from school independently.

## Nursery

The Nursery has its collection arrangements shared with parents.

### Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should independently walk to or from school.

In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings, provided they are 16 years old or above. Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the parent has informed the school that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by e-mail. If no one collects a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school, and parents will be contacted. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

Parents collecting children from classes in reception and KS1 should wait near the allocated dismissal areas and wait for the teacher to dismiss the child to you.

Parents **must not** take their child without informing the teacher. It is essential that both teacher and child know which adult will be collecting the child at the end of the school day, so please inform the school in advance of any changes. If a change is made without informing the school, contacting the parent for confirmation will be necessary.

### **Pupils in KS2 (Years 3,4,5 & 6)**

There is no set age for children to walk to school or home independently. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. However, we have agreed that our school policy states that pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 are brought to and collected from school.

Parents of children in years 3, 4 and 5 should wait on the playground near designated dismissal areas and wait until the teacher has released your child to you.

Year 6 classes are led out into the playground where they will be collected by parents from their teacher, or if they have permission, will be released to walk home independently.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to and from school independently in Year 6, you should assess any risks associated with the route, the local safeguarding context and your child's confidence. Then, please work with your children to build their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

You can prepare your child to make an independent journey in many ways. Children 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 an excellent 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 independently in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Teach your child to:

- When crossing the street, pay attention to traffic at all times; never become distracted.
- Always cross at the intersection with traffic lights; do not cross in the middle of the road. Alternatively, cross 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 follow someone who is a stranger or someone they know but is not a designated "safe" adult. (A safe adult is someone you and your child have previously agreed to be safe, such as a grandparent or trusted neighbour). And if that person tries to convince him to go with him or get close to him physically, scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away. Tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as possible if they grab them.

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 approached them?
5. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
6. Would they know the best action if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick, 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 unsure how your year 6 child would react, you should consider not allowing them to walk independently.**

Children in Year 6, if they have been given permission by their parents to walk home alone, may bring a mobile phone to school; these MUST be 'brick' phones. They must be switched off when the child enters the school property and given to the class teacher for safe keeping until the end of the day. Children should not use their phones on school property.

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If you decide your child in year six is ready for this responsibility, you must inform the school by letter. 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 on the school premises 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.

The school maintains a register of children who have permission to be dismissed by a staff member at the end of the school day to walk home alone. If a child has left the school to walk home alone but does not arrive home, the parent should contact the school first to seek clarification from the responsible adult as to when the child left the school site. If the parent feels that a period of time has passed and their child has not arrived home and that this is unusual or causing concern, the school recommends that the parent/carer calls the school to report their concern. The school can then offer assistance in using contacts to search for their child. It is recommended that the police be informed if the child is not traced within half an hour of this action being taken or as soon as the parent or school deems police involvement necessary.

**Information Form: Walking to and from School Without an Adult – Year 6 Only**

A person with parental responsibility must complete and return this reply slip to Little Ealing Primary School.

NB: A separate form must be completed for each child for whom there is a request.

Name of child: .....

Class: .....

1. I wish to inform you that my child will regularly walk without an accompanying adult to and from school.
2. I understand that the school will contact me if there are any concerns about my child walking to school alone.
3. I have taken reasonable precautions to ensure my child is safe, including showing them the safest route, demonstrating the route to them, and talking about road safety and stranger danger.
4. I understand that the school requires me to inform them if my child is absent from school for any reason.
5. I understand that the school will endeavour to contact me on the morning of registered absence if my child is absent from school and the school has received no notice (phone call or letter).

Signed:

(Please print name): .....

Contact Number  
(parent): .....

Contact Number  
(child, if they have one): .....

Please note that a mobile phone acceptable use form will also need to be completed if your child has a mobile phone with them. No smartphones are permitted to be brought to school.