



Walking To and From School Alone Policy

Approved by the governing body on: 19th October 2023

To be reviewed on: 19th October 2026

Pete Sayers

Signed on behalf of the governing body: _____

IDLE C.E. (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL
WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY

Vision Statement

At Idle CE (A) Primary School we celebrate being part of God's family. We inspire our children with a love of learning in a safe, caring environment, which is theologically rooted in our Christian Vision of:

Jesus' promise of "life in all its fullness" (John 10.10)

for children, young people and adults within our school community to flourish. We are driven by our vision to nurture Christian hope and high expectations for all involved with education of the pupils in our care and to serve the common good.

Rationale

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.

Pupils in Reception and KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Reception 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 with a responsible adult attending at the classroom door with the child on collection and drop off. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above. However, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over.

Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement and as long as the named adult has the password to authorise collection. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably in writing. If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, or if the adult turns up to collect your child and they do not have the password, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If the child is not collected and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer after appropriate efforts, we will consult with children's services. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings from the classroom doors.

Pupils in KS2

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own, we believe that pupils in year 3, 4 and 5 (until the Summer term) should be still brought to and collected from school by a responsible adult. This is to ensure their safety. Where we have safety concerns we will contact parents to make them aware and ask them to consider arrangements in place.

As pupils mature towards the end of Year 5 and in Year 6, and in readiness for transition to secondary school at the end of Year 6, we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone. 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 child to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness prior to this point. 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 and 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 way 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 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. 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?
9. If plans change, would your child know how to respond?

If you are not confident about how your child would react in the above scenarios then you should seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk on their own for their own safety. If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform school by completing the permission slip which is sent out at the end of Spring term of Year 5 and available from the school office after this point. 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 satisfactory improvement has been made.

Outside of the core school day

We will not allow children to walk home alone from after school clubs, regardless of age. Please bear this in mind if they are attending an after-school club and make appropriate collection arrangements. If attending early morning intervention groups, tuition or nurture breakfast club, children must be dropped off at school by a responsible adult unless they have permission to walk home alone (Year 5 Summer term and Year 6 pupils only). Failure to provide appropriate supervision of pupils arriving at school early will result in them not being able to attend activities out of the core school day.

Home and Safety Arrangements

Where children walk to, 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. Pupils in Year 5 (Summer term) and Year 6 are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school with them for safety reasons if they are walking to or from school unaccompanied in order to be able to access emergency adult support should they be required to do so. Parents must provide written authorisation for pupils to bring a mobile phone to school on the form found on the Mobile Phone Policy. Authorisation must be given by the Headteacher for pupils to bring a mobile phone to school. Violations of this policy may result in authorisation being revoked.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy