

Children Leaving School Premises/Walking Home Alone Policy

Written by	Richard Albert
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*Remember that I commanded you to be strong and brave.
So don't be afraid. The Lord your God will be with you
everywhere you go' (Joshua 1:9)*

As the harvest grows from the soil, Hayfield Cross came to life in 2015. From nothing, we have grown at the heart of our new community, persevering through challenge into a flourishing school. Guided by our Christian values the seeds of Joy, Integrity and Fellowship are planted as we instil this pioneering spirit in our children, challenging them through exciting learning to aspire to greatness in all that they do.

Hayfield Cross Church of England School

Children Walking To and From School Alone Policy

*"I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."
(Psalm 32.7-8)*

INTRODUCTION

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/carers are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this does not disallow independent travel. As a school, however, we are responsible for the welfare of our children and therefore must consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of them. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

CHILDREN IN EYFS, KS1 AND LOWER KS2 – YEARS 3 & 4

Our agreed school policy is that no child from Reception to Year 4 should walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises, either before or after school. In addition, **we will only hand over children to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above.** This includes walking children from school to a parked car.

Children will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent/carer that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that parents/carers keep the school informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents/carers contacted. If no one can be reached, the child(ren) will be placed in LASK After School Care and charges will be applied.

Children in these year groups will not be released by school staff unless the above criteria are met. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

CHILDREN IN UPPER KS2 – YEARS 5 & 6

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. As such, with regards to children in Upper KS2, we believe that parents/carers need to decide whether a child is ready for this responsibility. In deciding whether a child is ready to walk to school, parents/carers should assess any risks associated with the route and the child's confidence.

As with the younger classes, children will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent/carer that they have made this arrangement. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents/carers contacted. If no one can be reached, the child(ren) will be placed in LASK After School Care and charges will be applied.

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

- Children **must** be in Year 5 or 6.
- It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order that they may make an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing of fast roads and walking through secluded areas are to be discouraged. A single route should be agreed.
- Parents/carers must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger. It is parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently happy that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey safely.
- During winter months and/or inclement weather, children must be dressed appropriately.
- Children should preferably walk in a group and not alone.
- There should be someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- Any child must be capable of arriving home within 30 minutes of the end of the school day (15:15). We do not consider journeys of over 30 minutes appropriate for children under 12 to walk at this stage.
- If any child does not arrive home within the agreed timeframe, parents/carers must immediately notify the school in order that appropriate action can be taken, which may include contacting the emergency services.

The school must be informed by parents/carers completing a proforma if they wish their child to walk home. Children will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

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

When deciding whether a child is ready for this responsibility parents/carers may 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?
- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Would they know who best to approach to get help?

If parents/carers are not confident about how their child(ren) would react then they should seriously consider whether to allow them to walk on their own.

If and when it is decided that a child is ready for this responsibility then the parent/carer must inform the school by completing the slip below. Children will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. Children will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school and also whilst wearing the school uniform. Should their behaviour not be acceptable the parent/carer will be asked to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

**IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE, PLEASE
ENSURE THE SCHOOL IS NOTIFIED IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.**



Permission for children in Years 5 or 6 to walk to and from school unaccompanied

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school asap.

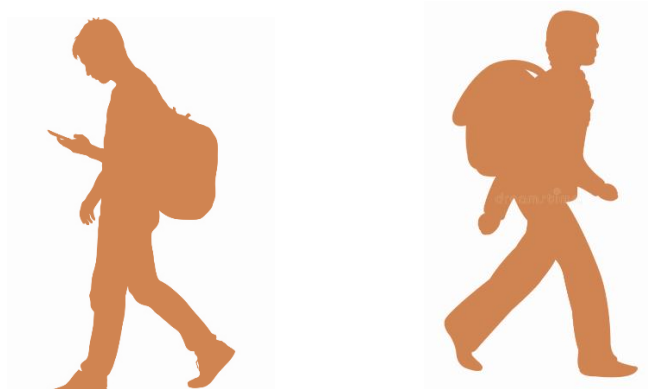
Name of child:			
Year Group:		Class Name:	

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis. I will notify you immediately in writing should this arrangement change.

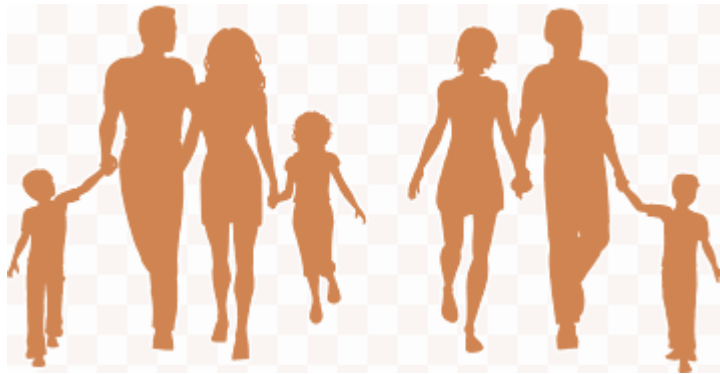
I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in 'Children Walking To and From School Alone Policy'.

I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to and from school alone, the school is not responsible for my child's actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.

Signature:		Date:	
Print Name:			



Appendix 2 – Preparing your child for walking home from school



There are lots of ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. We recommend that you work with your children on route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. Children who are driven to school do not necessarily 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 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. This includes being distracted by their mobile phone if they have one.
- 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.