

Walking to and from School Policy

Introduction

Parents must take full responsibility and care to ensure that their child arrives safely at school each morning. Where children walk to school it is understood by the school that parents ensure that their child takes the safest route to school as is possible and that they are accompanied to and from 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 the later years of Primary School, parents may decide that their child is capable of walking to or from school alone, particularly if they live very close to the school and do not need to cross any roads. The following guidelines set out the school's advice, policy and procedures should parents wish to consider allowing their child to walk to or from school or part of the way (e.g. down to basketball court) without an adult.

Definition for purposes of this policy- Responsible Adult:

The parent or an adult known to the class teacher who has been given this responsibility by the parents and school has been informed of this. An adult for this purpose is secondary school age and upward i.e. not a KS 2 pupil.

Journey to School

Although it is up to parents' discretion how children travel to school each day, the school recommends that all children in Year 3 and below are accompanied by a responsible adult on the way to school and that older children only walk alone if the parent is fully satisfied that it is safe for them to do so.

Parents/carers are asked to inform the school if their child will be regularly walking to school alone so that a register can be compiled should they not arrive at school at the appropriate time in the morning.

The school recognises a clear responsibility to contact parents if their child does not arrive for morning registration and the parent has not contacted the school to inform the school of absence due to illness or other reason.

The school will therefore ensure that registers are checked and will then make attempts to contact the parent/carer to ascertain a reason for absence or to highlight that a child has not attended registration. Contact will be sought with the parent/carer within 1 hour (maximum) of registers being taken and an absence without reason being noted by classroom staff.

Where a child has left their parent with the intention of walking to school but has not arrived and the school has made contact with the parent/carer and an issue of a missing child is therefore noted, the school will immediately contact the police to report a missing child. The school's designated senior person for child protection will then be immediately informed and safeguarding procedures for child protection will be followed. Parents are responsible for informing the school immediately should their child be unwell or otherwise unable to attend school.

Home-time Collection

Pupils in the EYFS, KS1 & Year 3

Our agreed school policy is that **no pupil in the EYFS (Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) and Year 3** 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 pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are deemed as a responsible adult as per the definition in this policy. Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement. It is important that both teacher and child knows 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, it will be necessary to contact the parent for confirmation of permission. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

Pupils in Years 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 upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore as regards pupils in Year 4, 5 & 6 we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility. We would still highly recommend that pupils in Year 4 are still brought to and collected from school.

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 lots of 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 way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Parents and carers should teach their 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. (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). And if that person tries to convince him to go with him or tries to physically get close to him, 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 parents should 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, 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 child 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. If the school has concerns about a particular child's ability to travel safely or if the child lives too far away, agreement for the child to travel home alone may be declined.

The school maintains a register of children who have permission to be dismissed by a member of staff at the end of the school day to walk home (or part of the way) alone. If a child has left the school to walk home alone but does not arrive home, the parent should contact the school in the first instant 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 at 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 are informed if the child is not traced within half an hour of this action being taken or indeed as soon as the parent or school deems police involvement is necessary.

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, this will be dealt with in accordance with the school behaviour and discipline policy, and you will be asked to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

Signed: *Melanie Murfin*

Date: *June 2016*

Written: June 2016

Last updated:

Review date: June 2017

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Grampian Primary Academy

Request permission for my child to **walk from school to home alone** (part or all of the way)

- 1) I wish to request permission for my child to walk home from school without an accompanying adult on a regular basis.
- 2) I have taken reasonable precautions aimed at ensuring my child is safe including showing them the safest route, demonstrating the route to them and talking to them about road safety and stranger danger, not allowing them to walk home alone in the dark.
- 3) I understand that the school may refuse permission for my child to walk home unaccompanied by an adult if it is deemed that it is not safe to do so (we will speak to you directly if this is the case).
- 4) I understand that the school will send written confirmation that my child has permission to walk home without an accompanying adult.
- 5) I understand that I have full responsibility for my child's safety if they walk home alone.

Signed Parent

Name (print)

Emergency Contact Number

Address, if different from home address, of where the child will be walking to and on which days (e.g. to a Childminder)

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Signed..... Date: (d/m/y)

(Name print).....