



## Walking To and From School Policy

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2		

**Contents**

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1.....	3
3. Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) .....	3
4. Parents should teach their child to:.....	4
5. When deciding whether a child is ready for this responsibility parents might want to consider the following:.....	4
6. Arrangements for After-School .....	4
7. Monitoring and Review .....	4
8. Appendix A: Permission Form .....	5

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. 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.

1.2 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 must 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.

## **2. Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1**

2.1 Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 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 14 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).

2.2 Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that parents keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, in advance. If someone arrives to collect a child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified their identity. If no one arrives 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, we will consult with children's services. We will not allow older brothers or sisters on roll in school to collect younger siblings as they do not meet the age expectation.

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

3.1 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 should be still brought to and collected from school and this is our school policy. Therefore, as regards pupils in Year 6, we believe that parents need to decide whether their child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone.

3.2 All children who attend Duggies before and after school care provision need to be dropped off and collected by an adult and their child will be signed in and out of this provision.

3.3 In deciding whether a child is ready to walk to school, parents should assess any risks associated with the route and their child's confidence. Parents should work with their children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. There are many ways parents can prepare their 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.

3.4 Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. The best way to do this is for parents to walk with their 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 on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

#### **4. Parents 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. Where a school crossing is present, always cross here, even if it is a longer route. 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.

#### **5. When deciding whether a child is ready for this responsibility parents 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 approached 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 did not want to do?
- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Would they know whom best to approach to get help?

5.1 If parents are not confident about how their child would react, then they should seriously consider whether they should allow them to walk on their own.

**5.2 If parents decide that their child is ready for this responsibility, they must inform the school by letter, by completing the slip below or completing the form on ParentApp.** Children will be prevented from walking home unless this written permission has been given.

5.3 Children will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable, parents will be asked to accompany them or collect them until they have proven that they can be trusted again.

#### **6. Arrangements for After-School**

6.1 We will not allow children, of any age, to walk home alone in the dark. Parents should bear in mind that if their children are attending an after-school club, it may be dark when the club finishes and as a result they **will not** be allowed to walk home alone.

6.2 Children who attend Duggies before and after-school care provision need to be dropped off and collected by an adult and they must sign their child in and out of this provision.

6.3 Permission to walk home after a club must be sought from the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team. If at any time there are changes to arrangements the school should be informed in writing immediately.

#### **7. Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed **every three years** and approved by the **Headteacher**.

**8. Appendix A: Permission Form**

**Parbold Douglas Church of England Academy**

**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied**

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school or complete the form on ParentApp.

Name of child: ..... Year: 6

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 ‘Safeguarding pupils walking to and from school’.

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.

Signed..... Date: .....

[Name print].....