

Larkrise Primary School



Children Walking Home Alone Guidance

2022-2023

SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

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, Year 1 and Year 2

No pupil in Foundation Stage 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. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings who are at secondary school and aged 16. This MUST be put in writing to the school. 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 you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter. If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, 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 within 30 minutes and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer/emergency contacts we will consider consultation with Children's Services. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings as this does not guarantee the safety of all the children involved.

Pupils in Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6

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 and 4 should be still brought to and collected from school. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings as this does not guarantee the safety of all the children involved.

In deciding whether your child in years 5 and 6 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 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. The best way to do this is to walk with your children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road and learning how to navigate. Only children in years 5 and 6 will be permitted to walk home alone, however if we feel that this is not in the best interest of the child or there is a concern regarding safeguarding, we will discuss this further with you.

If you have decided that your child in year 5 or year 6 should walk alone, you should 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.
- Ensure your child is aware of the 'green cross code' and 'clever never goes' which replaces 'stranger danger'. You can find more information at www.clevernevergoes.org
- 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? Make sure there is someone at home to meet your child.
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
3. Are they road safety aware? – Check the route that they will take.
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?

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 fill in the attached form informing the school. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless written permission has been received by the school.

In Winter months we will require a further permission slip if you wish to allow your Y5 or Y6 child to walk home from school after clubs. Clubs usually finish at 4pm and in winter months it is often dark by this time. We would ask you to seriously consider NOT allowing your child to walk home from school after a club during this time.

I, _____ (parent name), parent of _____, who is in Year 5/6, give permission for my daughter/son to walk home from school at the end of the school day (3.15pm). I take full responsibility for their safety once they have left school and will ensure there is someone at home for their arrival.

Signed _____

Date _____