



## **The Queen's Church of England Primary School**

*Encouraging every child to reach their full potential, nurtured and supported in a Christian community which lives by the values of Love, Compassion and Respect.*

# **THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL Children Walking Independently To and From School Policy**

Agreed by: SLT  
Date: September 2021

Review Cycle: Three yearly  
Next Review Date: September 2024

All the Queen's School policies should be read in conjunction  
with the Equality Policy

If you require a copy of this document  
in paper, large print, braille or audio format,  
please contact the School Office

**The Queen's CE Primary School**  
**Children Walking Independently To and From School Policy**

**Safeguarding Children Walking to and from School Alone- A Guide for Parents**

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 EYFS & Years 1,2,3,4**

Our agreed school policy is that:

- No pupil in EYFS or Years 1,2,3,4 should walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.
  
- The school will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above.  
Older brothers or sisters in school, will not be allowed to collect younger siblings.
  
- Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement. Please keep the school informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably in writing.
  
- If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If all efforts have been exhausted and no one is able to be contacted by the close of school, then a referral will be made to Richmond Single Point of Access.

**Pupils in Years 5 and 6**

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 may walk to and from school independently of an adult, however we would recommend that parents are mindful of this study by the University of Iowa, whose results found that:

*Children up to their early teenage years had difficulty consistently crossing the street safely, with accident rates as high as 8 percent with 6-year-olds. Only by age 14 did children navigate street crossing without incident, while 12-year-olds mostly compensated for inferior road-crossing motor skills by choosing bigger gaps in traffic.*

**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 together is good for the environment and 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.

- Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, (planning the road safety skills and general awareness.
- Teach them how to assess gaps in traffic and when is a good time to step off the pavement to cross.
- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross where there are traffic lights or on the designated crossing; 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.
- Listen for traffic coming.
- Look left, look right and left again before crossing.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
  
- 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).
  
- Ensure they can lead you in crossing the road regularly before allowing them to do so independently.

**When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you might want to consider the following:**

- Are they road safety aware?  
Assess any risks associated with the route and your child's walking speed, ability to assess gaps in traffic, make decisions about stepping off the kerb to cross and their confidence levels.
- Do you trust them to walk straight home?
- Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?

- 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 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 email. 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 and on the way home. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you 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 you let the school know in writing immediately. If the change needs to be implemented at speed, please also **telephone the school office**, ensuring that you speak with a member of staff.