



Walking To and From School Policy

Policy Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

As a school, the safety of our children is our number one priority. Therefore, the safeguarding team have agreed this policy in relation to children walking to and from school.

Although 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 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or Key Stage 1 (Y1 and Y2)

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in EYFS or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from school on his or her own or be left on their own. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are of secondary school age (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 and parents or carers will be contacted).

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 or phone call to the school office. 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 and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we are obliged to contact social services. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 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 and this is our school policy. With regards to pupils in Year 5 and 6, we believe that you as parents and carers need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone.

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 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, 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.

When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you might want to make sure they understand, and are aware of, the following:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted. For example, listening to music on ear pods or looking at their mobile phones.
- 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.

When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you 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 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 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?

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.

Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the way to and from school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to collect them at the end of the school day until they have proved they can be trusted to walk home unaccompanied again.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after school club as it may be dark when the club finishes in the winter months.

Where children walk to, or walk home from school, alone, we would usually expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive. If the child will be leaving from, or returning to, an empty house, we would expect that this is only for a short period of time and that the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY EITHER IN WRITING OR VIA THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

Fens Primary School

Permission to walk home unaccompanied letter

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have had a number of requests for children to walk home on their own at the end of the school day. The school's 'Walking to and from School Policy' states that only children in Year 5 and 6 are able to walk home on their own. As a school, we do not feel it is appropriate for children any younger than this walking home on their own. Additionally, we have also had requests for older children in Years 5 and 6 to collect younger children and walk home with them. Again, as a school, we do not feel this is appropriate in terms of safeguarding the pupils of Fens Primary School.

For further information, please see our 'Walking to and from School Policy' which can be found on the school website.

Please could you sign the form below to state that you give permission for your child to walk home unaccompanied at the end of the school day.

Children who are walking home from school will wait with their class teacher and will then be escorted off the school grounds.

The following information from the Walking to and from School Policy has been added for your information:

'Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the way to and from school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to collect them at the end of the school day until they have proved they can be trusted to walk home unaccompanied again.'

Thank you for your understanding,

Mr C. Keen

I _____ parent/carer of _____
give permission for my child to walk home unaccompanied at the end of the school day.

My child's year group _____

My child's teacher _____

Signed _____