

CHOWBENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY



POLICY ON 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 the Infants or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that **no pupil in the Infants 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. 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 no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted.

Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 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 KS2 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 3 and 4 at least 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 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 an early 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.

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 or where there is a lollipop person; 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 you might want to 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 did not want to do (scream, shout, kick, or 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 complete the appropriate consent form available from the school office or website. Your child

will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

If school has concerns about a particular child's ability to travel safely or if a child lives too far away (more than 15 minutes away) permission for the child to walk home alone may be refused.

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 you will be asked to accompany them 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 US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.



Walking home from school – Years 4, 5 and 6

Dear Parents/Carers,

We understand that parents may wish to allow their child in Years 4, 5 and 6 to walk home from school unaccompanied, with the informed decision that they are responsible for their child's safety on their way to and from school, even when they are not physically present.

As you will appreciate, the safety of pupils is our main concern, and so I would like to share the following points:

- Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 may walk home from school with written permission from parents/carers (see the Walking Home agreement).
- Parents are responsible for informing the school immediately should their child be unwell or otherwise unable to attend school. This includes informing the school prior to taking their child for any early morning medical examinations (e.g., doctor or dentist) which may cause their child to miss registration in the morning and arrive in school later than 8.45am.
- We understand that you may wish for your child to carry a mobile phone if walking home unaccompanied, and this will be permitted. For safeguarding reasons, mobile phones must be switched off and handed to the office each morning to be stored securely.

If you wish for your child to walk home unaccompanied, please complete the form below. To discuss this topic further, please feel free to contact me via the school office or email: n.more@chowbentprimary.org.uk

Kind regards,

Miss N More
Inclusion and Safeguarding Lead



Walking home from school agreement

Child's Name: Year:

- ✓ I give permission for my child to walk home from school unaccompanied each day at 3.20pm.
- ✓ I understand that my child is my responsibility outside of school hours (walking to and from school).
- ✓ I understand that if my child brings a mobile phone to school, it must be stored securely in the office during school hours for safeguarding reasons.
- ✓ I understand that the mobile phone will be the responsibility of my child at all other times.

Signed: Date:

Relationship to child: