

	With God we grow to live life in all its fullness	
Independent walking to/from school policy	Issued: November 2022	Issued by: J Little - Headteacher
Policy Number: FPS/0023		

Feckenham CofE Primary School

Independent Walking To/From School Policy

Date Policy Reviewed:	November 2022	
Date Approved by Governing Body:	17.11.22	
Signed Headteacher:		Jeannette Little
Signed Chair of Governors:		Julie Grieve
Review Date	November 2024	

Introduction

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 safeguarding and 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.

Reception and Years 1 – 4

For pupils in Reception and Years 1 – 4 our agreed school policy is that no pupil 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. Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school had been informed by the parents that they have made this arrangement.

We also ask that you keep us 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. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

Upper Key Stage 2 – Years 5 and 6

There is no set age when children are ready to independently walk to or from school on their own. It very much depends on their maturity and confidence. Therefore, as regards pupils in Upper KS (years 5 & 6) we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.

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. 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 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 wayfinding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

When deciding whether your child is ready for the responsibility of independently walking to / from school you might want to consider the following:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight to the location agreed i.e. home, school, Winfield car park?
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 didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick, 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 children 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 completing the slip below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been received.

At Feckenham CofE Primary School safeguarding our children is taken very seriously and therefore, if you decide your child can walk independently to and from school, we also strongly recommend the following arrangements are in place:

- The route your child will walk has been checked by you to assess the appropriateness of the journey.
- A single route has been agreed between you and your child, that your child should walk every time.
- Your child is dressed appropriately for the weather conditions, particularly during the winter months.
- Children walk in a group rather than alone where possible.
- Your child should know from memory a relevant mobile number e.g. parent / carer mobile number.
- They should be walking to an agreed location to meet an adult.
- There should be an agreed timeframe by which the child should have arrived at their destinations. It is recommended this is less than 30 minutes. The school should be contacted immediately if your child does not arrive within the agreed timeframe in order that appropriate action can be taken.

Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst walking independently to and from school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to accompany them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE THE ARRANGEMENT YOU HAVE MADE PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET THE SCHOOL KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY



INDEPENDENT WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

I confirm that _____(name) who is in Year _____ at Feckenham CofE Primary School may walk independently to and from school.

I confirm that I have read and understand the school's Independent Walking To / From School Policy.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____