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| **Independent walking to/from school policy** | **Issued**: October 2026 | **Issued by**: T Howarth - Headteacher |
| **Policy Number: FPS/0023** | | |

# Feckenham CE Primary School

# Independent Walking To/From School Policy

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| **Date Policy Reviewed:** | October 2026 | |
| **Date Approved By Governing Body:** | | |
| **Signed Headteacher:** | | Tanya Howarth |
| **Signed Chair of Governors:** | | Julie Grieve |
| **Review Date** | October 2028 | |

## Introduction

There is no law that specifies an age at which a child may travel independently to or from school. *A Family's 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 responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and arrives safely. However, schools also have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and to take reasonable steps to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for pupils leaving the school site. Keeping children safe in education 2026 makes clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that schools should take action where there are concerns about a child's welfare.

At Feckenham CE Primary School, decisions regarding independent walking are made on an individual basis, taking account of the child's age, maturity, confidence, understanding of personal safety and ability to manage the responsibility.

Permission for a child to leave the school site independently will only be granted where both the parent/carer and the school agree that the child is ready.

## Reception and Years 1 to 4

Children in Reception and Years 1 to 4 must be collected by a parent, carer or authorised adult.

Children in these year groups will not be permitted to leave the school site independently.

Children will only be handed over to:

- a parent or carer;
- a named adult authorised by the parent/carer;
- an older sibling aged 14 years or over.

Parents must inform the school of any temporary changes to collection arrangements. Wherever possible, this should be provided in writing.

If a child is not collected as expected, they will remain safely supervised by school staff while attempts are made to contact parents and emergency contacts.

## Years 5 and 6

As children grow older, some may develop the maturity, confidence and independence required to leave the school site without being collected by an adult.

At Feckenham CE Primary School, permission for independent walking is considered on an individual basis and should be viewed as a partnership between home and school.

Whilst parents know their child best, the school is also able to contribute important information regarding a child's:

- maturity and judgement;
- awareness of personal safety;
- reliability in following instructions;
- behaviour;
- ability to manage responsibility;
- understanding of road safety and risk.

Permission will only be granted where both the parent/carer and the school are satisfied that the child is ready.

## Factors to Consider

When considering whether a child is ready for independent departure, parents and school staff should consider the following:

- Does the child consistently follow instructions and school expectations?
- Can the child be relied upon to travel directly to the agreed destination?
- Does the child demonstrate appropriate road safety awareness?
- Would the child know what to do if approached by a stranger?
- Would the child know how and where to seek help if required?
- Does the child understand how to keep themselves safe?
- Is the child confident enough to make safe decisions independently?
- Are there any additional needs or vulnerabilities that should be considered?
- Is the route appropriate for the child's age and level of independence?

## Parent-School Agreement Process

Parents wishing their child to leave the school site independently should complete an Independent Walking Request Form.

### The following process will then be followed:

- Stage 1 - Parent Request

### The parent/carer submits a written request and provides details of:

the proposed arrangements;

the agreed destination or collection point;

the route the child is expected to take;

any relevant medical, SEND or safeguarding information.

Stage 2 - School Consideration

### The Headteacher, alongside relevant staff, will consider:

- the child's age and maturity;
- behaviour and conduct in school;
- attendance and punctuality;
- ability to follow instructions;
- awareness of personal safety;
- any safeguarding, SEND or wellbeing considerations.
- Stage 3 - Decision

### Parents will be informed of the school's decision.

### Permission may be:

- approved;
- approved with specific conditions;
- declined.
- Stage 4 - Ongoing Review

Once permission has been granted, arrangements will remain under review.

Parents must inform the school immediately if there are any changes to arrangements or circumstances that may affect the child's safety.

### Refusal of Permission

The school reserves the right to refuse a request for independent walking where it believes the arrangement is not in the child's best interests or where there are concerns regarding safety.

### Examples may include:

- concerns regarding maturity or judgement;
- unsafe behaviour;
- poor road safety awareness;
- safeguarding concerns;
- medical or SEND needs that impact the child's ability to travel safely;
- previous incidents demonstrating an inability to manage the responsibility.

Where permission is refused, the reasons will be discussed with parents and reviewed as appropriate.

### Withdrawal of Permission

**Permission may be withdrawn if concerns emerge after approval has been granted.**

### This may occur where:

- the child fails to follow agreed arrangements;
- there are concerns about safety or behaviour;
- significant changes in circumstances arise;
- safeguarding concerns emerge.

Where possible, any concerns will first be discussed with parents and appropriate support provided.

If permission is withdrawn, alternative collection arrangements will be required.

### Recommended Safety Arrangements

Where permission has been granted, the school strongly recommends that:

- parents have assessed the route carefully;
- a consistent route is agreed;
- the child knows how to contact a parent or carer;
- the child travels directly to the agreed destination;
- expected arrival times are agreed in advance;
- children travel with friends where appropriate;
- suitable arrangements are in place during poor weather or darker winter months.

### Responsibility

Once a child has been formally dismissed from school and has left the school site in accordance with an agreed independent walking arrangement, responsibility for their supervision and welfare passes from the school to the parent or carer.

Parents remain responsible for ensuring that arrangements outside the school site are appropriate and safe.

Appendix A

## Independent Walking Agreement

Child's Name: _____

Year Group: _____

Agreed Destination / Collection Point: _____

Expected Route: _____

Parent/Carer Declaration: _____

I request permission for my child to leave the school site independently at the end of the school day.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the Independent Departure from School Policy;
- I believe my child is ready for this responsibility;
- I have discussed personal safety and road safety with my child;
- I understand that permission is subject to school approval;
- I will notify the school immediately of any changes to arrangements.

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

## School Approval

Having considered the information available, the school:

☐ Approves independent walking

☐ Approves independent walking with conditions

☐ Does not currently approve independent walking

Conditions (if applicable):

Headteacher: _____

Date: _____