

MONKSPATH JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL



Policy on Safeguarding Pupils Walking To and From School Unaccompanied by an Adult

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Background

There are no specific laws regarding the age at which children may walk to or from school independently.

"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 children attend school regularly and arrive safely. However, as a school, we are responsible for the welfare and safeguarding of our pupils and must therefore consider what constitutes good practice in keeping children safe.

At Monkspath School, we recognise that learning to travel around the local community independently is an important part of developing children's independence and Life Ready skills. We also have a duty to take appropriate action where we believe a child's welfare may be at risk.

With these factors in mind, the school's policy regarding pupils walking to and from school is as follows.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), in Key stage One (Years One and Two) and in Lower Key Stage KS2 (Years 3 and 4).

- No pupil in Nursery, Reception, Years 1 and 2, or Years 3 and 4 should walk to or from school unaccompanied.
- Pupils in these year groups should not be left unsupervised outside or on the school premises before or after school.
- Pupils should not walk to meet a parent or carer at a parked car or another agreed location away from the school site.
- We will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings aged 14 years or over who can reasonably be considered responsible enough to care for the child.
- This minimum age may be increased where there is more than one younger child to collect or where staff feel additional supervision is required.
- Pupils will not be handed over to another adult unless parents have informed the school of the arrangement in advance.
- Parents and carers should notify the school of any changes to normal collection arrangements, preferably in writing and with sufficient notice.
- If nobody arrives to collect a child in these year groups, the child will remain safely supervised at school while parents/carers are contacted.
- Older brothers or sisters who are also pupils at Monkspath Junior and Infant School will not be permitted to collect younger siblings and leave the site with them.

Pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)

We recognise that Years 5 and 6 are an important stage in preparing children for the transition to secondary school. For some families, this may include developing the skills and confidence required to walk to and from school independently.

Children who are routinely driven to school can have fewer opportunities to develop road awareness and independent travel skills. We therefore encourage parents to gradually build their child's confidence and independence over time.

As part of deciding whether a child is ready to walk independently, parents should carefully assess:

- The safety of the route.
- Traffic and road crossing requirements.
- The child's maturity and judgement.
- The child's confidence in dealing with unexpected situations.
- Seasonal factors such as weather and daylight hours.

Walking with children provides a valuable opportunity to teach:

- Road safety.
- Route planning and navigation.
- Personal safety.
- Awareness of risks.
- How and where to seek help if needed.
- How to identify trusted and safe adults.

These experiences help children develop the confidence and skills required to travel safely and independently.

Preparing Your Child for Independent Travel

Before allowing a child to walk independently, parents should ensure that they understand basic road safety, including:

- Always crossing roads at a recognised crossing point whenever possible.
- Crossing only where visibility is clear in all directions.
- Avoiding crossing between parked cars or near bends in the road.
- Paying attention to traffic at all times.
- Never walking in the road.
- Looking and listening carefully before crossing.
- Being aware of cyclists and other road users.
- Understanding that drivers may not always see pedestrians.
- Understanding that vehicle speed can be difficult to judge.
- Avoiding distractions, including mobile phones and headphones when walking.

Personal Safety

Parents should also ensure that children understand basic personal safety measures, including:

- If help is needed, seek assistance from a trusted adult such as a police officer, school staff member, shop worker, crossing patrol, or another responsible adult with children present.
- Never go anywhere with an adult or older child without parental permission.
- Tell a trusted adult immediately if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable, asks them to keep a secret, or encourages them to leave their planned route.
- Never accompany someone, even if known to them, unless that person has been identified by parents as a trusted adult.
- If approached in a way that makes them feel unsafe, move away, attract attention and seek help immediately.
- If in immediate danger, make as much noise as possible, move to a safe place and seek assistance from a trusted adult.

Questions for Parents and Carers to Consider

When deciding whether a child in Year 5 or Year 6 is ready to walk home independently, parents should consider:

1. Do you trust your child to walk directly home?
2. Do you trust your child to behave responsibly when with friends?
3. Is your child road safety aware?
4. Would your child know what to do if approached by an unfamiliar adult?
5. Would your child be confident enough to refuse inappropriate requests?
6. Would your child know how to respond if they felt threatened or unsafe?
7. Would your child know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would your child know who to approach for help?

If you are not confident that your child could respond appropriately to these situations, we strongly advise delaying independent travel arrangements.

Permission to Walk Home Following the Normal School Day

If you decide that your child in Year 5 or Year 6 is ready for this next stage, then you must inform the school by completing the [consent form on our school website](#).

The link is also emailed to parents each September. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission slip has been returned and received in school.

Consent for a pupil to walk home independently at the end of the normal school day does not automatically extend to attendance at after-school clubs, enrichment activities or extra-curricular provision. Separate consent must be provided for these arrangements where permitted under this policy.

Walking Home Following Extra-Curricular Activities

The school recognises that pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 may attend extra-curricular clubs, enrichment activities, educational visits or school events that finish later than the normal school day, typically up to 4.30pm.

Whilst some pupils may have permission to walk home independently at the end of the normal school day, additional consideration must be given to:

- Reduced daylight.
- Adverse weather conditions.
- Seasonal changes.
- The later finish time.
- Safeguarding considerations associated with travelling later in the day.

For safeguarding reasons:

- **Year 5 pupils may walk home unaccompanied following an extra-curricular activity during the Summer Term only**, provided that separate parental consent has been received by the school.
- **Year 6 pupils may walk home unaccompanied following an extra-curricular activity during the Summer Term and during Autumn Term 1 (up to the October half-term break)**, provided that separate parental consent has been received by the school.
- Outside of these periods, pupils attending extra-curricular activities must be collected by a parent, carer or another authorised adult notified to the school.
- Permission to walk home after the normal school day and permission to walk home after an extra-curricular activity are treated as **separate permissions**, and parents must complete the relevant consent arrangements for each.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw or refuse permission where there are safeguarding concerns or where independent travel is not considered to be in the child's best interests.

Parents remain responsible for assessing whether their child is sufficiently mature, confident and capable of travelling safely and independently.

Changes to Arrangements

If circumstances change during the school year and parents wish to alter their child's travel arrangements, they must notify the school immediately and complete any revised consent forms required.

This will ensure that school records remain accurate and that all staff are aware of the agreed arrangements.

Absence Procedures

Parents and carers must continue to notify the school on each day of a child's absence.

Where a child expected to attend school does not arrive and no explanation has been received, the school will follow its attendance and safeguarding procedures to establish the child's whereabouts. This may include contacting emergency contacts and, where necessary, involving other agencies.