

MONKSPATH JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL



Policy For Safeguarding Unaccompanied Children Walking To and From School

**Produced: July 2017
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By: Head Teacher**

MONKSPATH JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL UNACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

Background

There are no specific laws around age or distance of walking to or from school. "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 children independent travel.

As a school however, we are legally responsible for the welfare and safeguarding of our pupils and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. We see learning to travel around the local community independently as a part of each child's development of Life Ready skills. We do also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

For all 'out of normal school hours' activities eg after school functions, sports events, after school clubs, PTA events, school trips and After School Club etc. all children in all year groups, FS1 to Y6 inclusive, MUST be collected from school by an adult.

The policy in the school for children walking to and from school for a 9am start and at the end of school at 3.30pm 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 Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 or in lower Key Stage 2 (Yrs 3 or 4) should walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school nor should they walk to meet a parent or carer at a parked car or familiar place.
- We will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above and can be deemed responsible enough for to care for the child in their care. This 14 yrs age limit may vary upwards if there is more than one younger child to be collected or if the younger child may not safely follow the instructions of their older sibling.
- 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 to routines, preferably by letter and with sufficient notice for all relevant parties to be informed.
- If no-one arrives to collect a child in these year groups up to Y4 the child will be kept in school and parents/carers contacted. Older brothers or sisters, who are also pupils here, will not be allowed to collect their younger siblings and remove them from school.

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

We understand that during this period parents/carers may well feel that it is the appropriate time for their child to begin to prepare for the move to secondary school which may involve starting to walk to school or to walk home

unaccompanied by an adult. Children who are routinely 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.

In order for this to take place we ask you to begin preparing your child to come to school and to leave independently. As an intrinsic part of deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school, please assess any risks associated with the route and your child's own self confidence.

Walking to school with an adult is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. Begin to walk with your children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road. Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, general road safety skills, general risk awareness, 'Stranger Danger' and how to access help if needed etc. Help your children recognise 'safe strangers' by pointing them out when you are out and about in your community.

These experiences will help your child to gain the confidence to deal with traffic, to find their way home on their own, and to manage risks in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

1. When you have taught your child Basic Road Safety including:

- Always to cross at the intersection and preferably where there are traffic lights or at pedestrian crossings.
- Always to cross in a place where you can see clearly in all directions and to completely avoid crossing near parked cars or bends in the road.
- To pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the road.
- Not to walk 'in the road'.
- To look both ways before crossing; to listen for traffic coming; to cross while keeping a watchful eye on traffic.
- To look out for cyclists.
- To remember that drivers may not see them, even if they can see the car and driver.
- To remember that it is hard to judge the speed of a car.
- Never to become distracted or use mobile phones whilst walking etc.

2. And have taught your child Basic Safety Measures including:

- 'If you need help do not just approach anyone but look for someone like a uniformed police officer, a shopkeeper or worker with a nametag, or another parent with children.'
- 'It's important for you to get your parent's permission before going anywhere with another adult or child.'
- 'Pay attention to what people do. Tell someone right away if anyone tells you to keep a secret, makes you feel uncomfortable, or tries to get you to go with them.'
- 'Never to go with a stranger or even with someone they may know, but who has not been identified to the child as one of their designated "safe"

adults.' (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 friend or neighbour).

- 'If a person tries to convince you to go with him/her, or tries to physically get close to him/her, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away.'
- 'If they are grabbed at, tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as they can and run.'

And Finally

When deciding whether your child in Year 5 or 6 is ready for the responsibility of walking to school or going home alone, we would ask you to consider the following and check:

1. Do you trust your child to walk straight home?
2. Do you trust your child to behave sensibly when with a friend?
3. Is your child road safety aware?
4. Would your child know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
5. Would your child have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
6. Would your child 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 your child know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would your child know who best to approach to get help?

If you are not confident about how your child would react to the above then we ask you to seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk on their own at this stage.

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 slip below and returning it to school. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission slip has been returned and received in school.

In addition, please ensure that you inform us on each day of your child's absence if they are too unwell and will not be attending school. Failure to do so will cause us great concern and we will need to ascertain your child's whereabouts if they have not arrived in school as expected. This may include involving the emergency services.

Of course things can transpire throughout a school year and you may wish to make changes to the school travel arrangements made. If so, PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW by returning an updated permission form to school so that we can amend our records accordingly.

Monkspath Junior and Infant School
Permission for pupils to walk unaccompanied to and/ or from school

Person with parental responsibility is to complete and return this reply slip to school by Friday 8 th September 2017 or at any point after that date if any changes are to be made to your child's routine.

Name of child: Class: Year 5 / Year 6

I wish to inform you that at times my child will be:

- Walking to school
- Walking home from school
- I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.
- I will notify you each day that my child is to be absent from school.
- I have read and understood the guidelines above and have taken all reasonable precautions including those set out above to ensure my child's safety. I agree to notify school of any changes to these arrangements.

Parent/Carer Signature..... Date: / /

Parent/Carer Name (print).....

✂.....
Please complete and return form to school

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