

# MELDRETH PRIMARY SCHOOL

## 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 Puffin, Swift & Wren classes**

Our agreed school policy is that **no pupil in these classes** 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 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. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

### **Pupils in Osprey & Kite classes (Years 3 & 4)**

Remember to teach your child the **importance of going back into school** if whoever is collecting them is not in view. You also need to be confident that they would not go off with any other adults other than those you have made arrangements with.

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. **We highly recommend that pupils in year 3 and 4 are still brought to and collected from the school gate.** Children will wait with staff at the gate for collection.

### **Pupils in Kestrel and Hawk classes (Years 5 & 6)**

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. Therefore, as regards pupils in Years 5 & 6 we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility

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 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 in front of school where there is traffic calming; or at the corner of a 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:

Do you have confidence that:

1. They would walk straight home?
2. They would behave sensibly when with a friend?
3. They are road safety aware?
4. They would refuse to do what a stranger asked?

Would they know:

5. What to do if a stranger approaches them?
6. 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. What to do if they needed help?
8. Who best to approach to get help?

**If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform the school by letter or by completing the slip overleaf.**

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**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied (Kestrel & Hawk classes only)  
 Complete and return this reply slip to school a.s.a.p**

Name of child: .....Year:.....

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in 'policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone'.

Signed..... Date:

Name (print).....