

King's Cliffe Endowed Primary School

Unaccompanied to and from School Policy

Policy Updated – 27th March 2023

Review Date – March 2026



Chair of Governors:

(signed)

Overview

Guidance tells us that if schools are aware that parents are allowing an older sibling to look after a younger child, it would be good practice to provide information to parents/carers to assist safe decision making about the arrangements.

There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. However, it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk and therefore schools have a continual obligation to alert relevant authorities if they believe this is the case.

This could, theoretically, include the journey to and from school.

Further guidance contained in a small booklet produced by the NSPCC states that children under 8 cannot judge speed and distance of moving vehicles. The booklet is very informative and amongst other things has a section for parents on 'Keeping your Child Safe'. For further information please visit the NSPCC website at www.nspcc.org.uk

The DFE indicate that it is for each school to decide on their own pupil collection policy. The school is not responsible for the safety of a pupil once the school day is over and the pupil has left the school premises.

Approach

With this in mind, King's Cliffe Endowed Primary School has developed its own policy regarding how it approaches the issue of parents/carers wishing to allow their child/ren to walk home alone or be collected by a sibling or other responsible party. The policy not only reflects the values of the school, but more importantly addresses the safeguarding of our pupils.

Allowing your child to walk home alone

EYFS, KS1 and LKS2

The school WILL NOT permit any child below Year 5 to walk home alone. In all circumstances a responsible person, usually a parent or carer, or somebody authorised by a parent or carer and known by the school should collect the child at the end of the school day.

Years 5 – 6

Pupils in years 5 – 6 can, with the prior consent of a parent or carer walk home unaccompanied. Parents/carers wishing to exercise this option should complete Appendix 1 attached.

Assessing whether your child is ready to walk home alone.

As a parent/carers, we all ask ourselves, "At what age should I let my child walk home alone?"

The answer unfortunately isn't that straight forward. A child doesn't magically at some predetermined age become confident, assertive and capable. Ideally, and in reality the development of these attributes is a gradual process of ever-greater challenges during which a child gains experience and autonomy.

Some parents may feel safer by allowing their child to travel to and from school with a mobile phone. Whilst we do not allow mobile phones in school, the parent can arrange with the school office for the child to deliver their mobile upon arrival at school where it can be locked in the safe until the end of the day where it will be returned to the child.



Drop off and collection by older siblings

If it is not safe for a child to walk home alone unaccompanied, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person. We do not allow KS1 children to be collected by siblings unless they are over 18.

There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child, however it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. This can include in the care of an older sibling if the level of supervision is 'likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (Children and Young Persons Act, 1933). Therefore parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that should go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

If parents have given permission for older siblings to collect /drop off younger children this should be recorded. (Please see the school office to arrange this) If the school has any concern that older siblings are not competent to take younger siblings to and from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements; this must be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of collection) and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services where necessary.

The school has therefore set out in its policy that the minimum age at which an older sibling can collect or drop off a younger sibling is 14 years of age. The school have the right to refuse any person under this age permission to collect a pupil from the school's premises.

The suitability of a sibling caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case by case basis, by a judgment of the potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected; the length and nature of the journey home, the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected.



Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection can be applied to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school. Safeguarding concerns are reported to Children's Services, who will decide on the appropriate response.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues. The school governing body should ensure that as part of the service level agreement, the organisation has confirmed that:

- level one safeguarding children training has been completed by staff
- a child protection policy is in place

Monitoring and Evaluation

All of our policies and practice is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. Monitoring for this policy may take the form of surveys, assessment, parental consultation, and feedback from children. This will provide any recommendations to inform future policy and planning.



Appendix 1

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Walking to and from school in Year 5/6

As the children are now in Upper Key Stage 2 we recognise that they are becoming more independent and some parents may wish their child to walk to and from school unaccompanied.

If you would like your child to do this, please complete the slip below. If we do not receive the slip, we will assume that you will continue to pick them up.

Whilst we do not allow our pupils to have Mobile Phones in school, we understand that you may feel safer if they are walking to school with one. This needs to be arranged with the school office so that the phone can be collected from the pupil upon their arrival and stored safely.

We would also recommend that you consider them walking with a friend.

Yours sincerely



Lynda Bowyer

Headteacher

Walking to and from school independently

I give permission for my child to walk to and from school independently.

Child's name..... Class

Signed..... (Parent/Guardian)

