

BISHOPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

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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 Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 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.

If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted.

Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own; this depends upon maturity and confidence. Parents are responsible for deciding whether their child is ready for this responsibility.

Parents should teach children:

- Road safety awareness
- Stranger danger awareness
- Appropriate behaviour when walking to and from school

PLEASE REFER TO THE GUIDELINES IN THE POLICY TO ASSESS YOUR CHILD'S READINESS TO WALK TO AND FROM SCHOOL



1. Assessing Your Child's Readiness

Every child develops differently. Age alone is not a reliable indicator.

Consider whether your child can consistently:

- ☒ Follow rules even when distracted or in a hurry
- ☒ Understand and explain safety instructions in their own words
- ☒ Stay calm and think clearly if something unexpected happens
- ☒ Communicate confidently with trusted adults (teachers, police, shop staff)
- ☒ Remember routines (route, time, check-ins)

Ask yourself:

Would my child make safe choices if no adult was watching?

If the answer is "not always," they may need more time or supervised practice.

2. Understanding the Route to School

Walk the route together multiple times and look at it from a child's perspective.

The route should ideally:

- Avoid busy main roads where possible
- Have safe crossing points (pelican, puffin, zebra crossings)
- Be well-lit and used by other families
- Pass familiar, safe places (shops, library, houses of friends)

Your child should be able to:

- Describe the route clearly
- Know **not to take shortcuts**
- Recognise clearly where they should and should not go

3. Road Safety Rules (Essential)

Your child should **consistently follow these rules without reminders**:

Crossing Roads

- Stop at the kerb
- Look **right, left, right again**
- Listen for traffic
- Walk straight across (no running, no phones, no talking)



- Use crossings whenever possible

Walking Safely

- Walk on the pavement, away from the kerb
- Never step into the road between parked cars
- Be extra careful near driveways and junctions
- Remove headphones and keep phones in pockets

Practice tip:

Let your child "teach" you the rules – it shows what they truly understand.

4. Stranger Awareness (Without Creating Fear)

The goal is **confidence and caution**, not anxiety.

Teach your child:

- A stranger is **anyone they don't know**, even if they seem nice
- Never go anywhere with someone without your permission
- Never accept gifts, lifts, or help unless pre-approved

Important rule:

No secrets from parents about people they meet

5. What to Do If They Feel Worried or Unsafe

Your child should know exactly what to do if something feels wrong.

Teach them to:

- **Trust their instincts** – it's okay to leave a situation that feels uncomfortable
- Move quickly to a **safe place**, such as:
 - A nearby shop
 - A school
 - A trusted neighbour's house
 - A place with other adults or families

If approached:

- Say **"No" loudly**
- Walk or run away towards people



- Do not worry about being polite

6. Who Can They Ask for Help?

Explain that it's okay to ask for help from:

- A **teacher**
- A **police officer**
- A shop worker (behind a counter)
- A parent with children
- A school crossing patrol lollipop person

Practice what to say:

"I'm lost / I'm scared / I need help getting to school."

7. Communication and Check-Ins

Before independent walking, ensure:

- You know exactly **when** your child should arrive
- School knows your child is walking independently (if required)
- Your child knows **what to do if they are late**

Consider:

- A simple watch to track time
- A basic mobile phone (if appropriate) with:
 - Your number memorised
 - Clear rules for use
- A daily check-in routine ("Tell me one thing you noticed on your walk")

8. Gradual Independence Works Best

Instead of a sudden change:

1. Walk together
2. Walk slightly behind
3. Let them walk ahead while you follow
4. Observe discreetly from afar



5. Allow independent walking with check-ins

This builds confidence for both child **and** parent.

9. Final Questions for Parents

Before deciding, ask yourself:

- Does my child **want** to walk independently?
- Can they explain safety rules clearly?
- Do they respond responsibly when plans change?
- Is the route suitable for their age and size?
- Am I confident they would seek help if needed?

If any answer is “not yet,” that’s okay. Independence develops over time.

Key Message for Children

“Walking by yourself is a grown-up responsibility. You are never in trouble for asking for help or coming home if something feels wrong.”



Permission for Pupils to Walk To and From School

unaccompanied

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this slip to school.

Child's Name: _____

Year Group: _____

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

I will notify the school immediately should this arrangement change.

I confirm that I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the policy "Safeguarding Pupils Walking To and From School Alone".

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____



Permission for Pupils to Wait at the School Gate

(Years 3 to 6 only)

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this slip to school.

Child's Name: _____

Year Group: _____

I wish to inform you that my child will wait at the school gate at the end of the school day.

I understand that the school gate is not supervised and that my child must wait until the named adult collecting them is clearly visible.

I will notify the school immediately should this arrangement change.

I confirm that I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the policy "Safeguarding Pupils Walking To and From School Alone".

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

