

Yealmpstone Farm Primary School

Policy and Guidance

**Safeguarding pupils walking
to and from school alone.**

As a school, we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils and therefore must 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. Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this does not disallow independent travel for some age groups of the 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 judgment for parents to decide when children can play out on their own, walk to the shops or school."

Yealmpstone Farm Primary School have produced this policy for allowing children to independently travel home (or to another specified location).

Pupils in Foundation Stage & Pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 & 4

Our school policy is that no pupil in Reception, Key Stage 1 or Years 3 and 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. In addition, we will only hand over pupils from this age range to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 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 will not allow older brothers or sisters who attend Yealmpstone Farm Primary school to collect younger siblings.

We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If there has been no contact from parents and the children have still not been collected after 3.30pm, they will be sent to Bright Stars After School Club. In the unlikely event that we have not managed to contact you by 6pm, the Safeguarding Lead will be contacted and they will decide next steps. This could lead to contacting Social Services.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6

There is no age in law when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to and from school unaccompanied, 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 and from school together using road safety skills and general awareness.

Walking to School Unaccompanied

We ask that you inform us if your child is walking to school unaccompanied. We will also ask you to confirm whether or not they will be travelling with a mobile phone. You are responsible for ensuring your child's safety on their journey to school.

Walking Home from School Unaccompanied

We require your permission to dismiss your child from school without an adult so they can walk home from school unaccompanied. Once you give your permission, we will no longer be responsible for ensuring that your child is with an adult at the end of the school day. You are responsible for ensuring your child's safety during travel from school and when they arrive home.

Preparing Your Child to Travel Unaccompanied

If you do decide to allow your child to walk to or from school alone, we would encourage you to prepare your child to make an independent journey. Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. The best way to do this is to walk with your children initially, and teaching them about crossing the road. This helps them gain the experience and

confidence to deal with traffic and find their way on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Children with SEN

Deciding whether a child with special educational needs should walk home alone will be on a case-by-case basis. Parents should discuss with the SENCo in the first instance.

Mobile Phones and Smart Watches Guidance and Procedures:

There are benefits to your child traveling with a mobile phone in terms of communication, security and tracking. There are also dangers of carrying something valuable, if your child has a valuable smartphone, this can be attractive to others and could make your child more vulnerable. You need to ensure you have spoken to them about how to keep their phone safe and what to do should they be approached by someone who wants it.

Once in school, your child will not be allowed to keep hold of their phone. These must be turned off on entering the playground and put into the class phone box on entering school. Please note that if a child fails to hand in the phone on arrival, they will be given one warning. The 2nd time they fail to hand in their phone, the phone will be taken away and only returned to a parent/family member.

Smart Watches that can be used to access the internet, or used as a mobile phone or messaging device, are not permitted to be worn during the school day.

To Keep Your Child Safe on the Road, Teach Your Child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross at an intersection, if it exists, where there are traffic lights; do not cross in the middle of the road. Alternatively, cross in a place where you can see clearly in all directions. Avoid crossing behind parked cars or on bends in the road.
- Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming; cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Lookout 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 to be cautious.

When Deciding Whether Your Child is Ready for this Responsibility, Consider the Following:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight home?
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
3. Are they road safety aware?
4. Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
5. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
6. Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do?

7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?

8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

If you are not confident about how your child would react then you should seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk on their own.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, then you must inform the school by completing the permission form. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

Absences

Please note that while we do not normally contact parents to advise that children have arrived safely at school, we will contact you if your child has not arrived, in line with our usual absence practice.

Continuing to Ensure Your Child Travels to and from School Safely

We may request to meet with you if we have concerns about your child travelling home safely, or in the event that your child is ill, etc. In such cases we will contact you so that you can put in place arrangements for your child to be collected. Your child will be responsible for their behaviour whilst on and off the school premises both before and after school. Should their behaviour be deemed a safeguarding risk, you will be asked to accompany them to and from school until they can safely travel to and from school again.