



Let your light shine Matthew 5:14

## **KIRK FENTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Walking Home Alone Policy

Review Date: Autumn 2024

### **Our Vision**

Rooted in Christian belief, our vision for every member of this school community is to feel valued and respected, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, faith, belief or ability. Through developing a love of learning, each individual will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and aspire to become the person they were born to be.

*Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven. Matthew 5:14-16*

## Overarching Principles

There are no laws around the 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 their safety. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

### Pupils in EYFS or Key Stage 1

Our school policy is that **no pupil in EYFS 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 older. Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been notified in advance by the child's parent that they have made this arrangement. If no one arrives to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. We will not allow older siblings in school to collect younger siblings in these year groups.

### Pupils in Key Stage 2

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends on their maturity and confidence. Therefore we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility. We would however still recommend that children in years 3 and 4 are brought to and collected from school.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school, you should assess any risks associated with the route they will take and your child's confidence. Work with your children to build up their independence through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are lots of ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are driven to school often do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and can therefore be more vulnerable when they start to walk to school independently. Walking to school is a great opportunity for younger children to learn road safety skills such as crossing roads safely, learning to navigate and a host of other skills such as stranger danger. This helps them gain experience and confidence to deal with traffic and wayfinding on their own as they get older.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the road
- Always cross at the crossing point by the roundabout or at a place where you can see clearly along the road if further away from school. Avoid parked cars or bends in the road.

- Look both ways whilst crossing; listen for oncoming traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that although you can see a car, the driver may not be able to see you.
- Remember that it is sometimes hard to judge the speed of a car so be cautious.
- Never, ever follow someone who is a stranger or someone they recognise but who is not a designated 'safe' person to them. (A 'safe' adult is someone that has previously been agreed upon between you and your child to help if they get into difficulty)
- Be aware of stranger danger and know what to do if someone tries to convince you to go with them or tries to touch you.

When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you might want to consider the following:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight home without being distracted?
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with friends?
3. Are they road safety aware?
4. Would they know what to do if approached by a stranger?
5. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asks?
6. Would they know the best action to take if grabbed by a stranger? (scream, shout, kick, fight)
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they be able to approach someone if they needed help?

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

### **Walking Home Alone at the End of the School Day**

Parents of children who wish their children to walk home unescorted at the end of the school day must adhere to the following:

- Parents must have informed the school by email that their child will be walking straight home from school at the end of the school day.
- Children should be in Years 5 or 6.
- It is the parent's responsibility to check the route that their children will walk in order to assess the appropriateness of the journey. A single route should be agreed with the child.
- Parents must be certain that their child has the necessary understanding of road safety and stranger danger. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey alone and on foot safely.
- Children should be dressed appropriately for the journey and the time of year.
- Where possible, children should walk in a group rather than alone.
- Children should know their home phone number or a parent's mobile number by heart or have a contact number written down and kept with them.
- There must be an adult at home to meet the child on arrival.
- Children should be able to reach home within 30 minutes of leaving school. Longer journeys are not considered appropriate for primary pupils.
- If a child does not arrive home within the agreed timeframe, parents must immediately inform school in order that appropriate action can be taken.