



Pikes Lane Primary School

Travelling home from school Policy

LEADING SCHOOL | LEARNING SCHOOL | INCLUSIVE SCHOOL | HEALTHY SCHOOL | EXTENDED SCHOOL | REFLECTIVE SCHOOL

Policy Leader: Extended Services and pupil welfare manager



Overview

Children's safety is of paramount importance to us at Pikes Lane. National 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. Consequently, this could, theoretically, include the journey to and from school.

The DFE indicates 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, Pikes Lane 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 lower KS2

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.

With consent of the parent, children in KS2 may walk round to meet the parent on the school grounds where the parent has multiple collections to carry out. It is understood, that in the parent giving this permission, the parent accepts responsibility for meeting the child appropriately and also in the event that the child then chooses to leave the grounds without permission.

Upper KS2 (Years 5 – 6)

Pupils in years 5 and 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. In exceptional circumstances, the school will accept verbal communication from the parent and this will be logged on CPOMS.

Collection by older siblings

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 younger children at 3.15pm, this should be recorded. (Please see attached slip – Appendix 2 In exceptional circumstances, the school will accept verbal communication from the parent and this will be logged on CPOMS.) 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 a younger sibling is 10 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 school have also set out a 2 child maximum for sibling collection. This means that only 2 younger siblings can be collected by one older child.

The suitability of a sibling caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case by case basis, by a judgement 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

Depending on the time of the year, the procedures for sibling collection and children walking home alone differ following extra-curricular activities. Any child attending after school activities in winter (October – February) must be collected by a parent/carer or other responsible adult due to darker evenings and road safety.

Right to refuse a parent or carer to collect a pupil

There are factors which may affect a parent/carers ability to care for and look after a child/ren and ensure and provide a safe and friendly environment for them.

The use of drugs/alcohol or the presence of mental health difficulties does not in itself necessarily mean that the parents/carers are uncaring, incompetent or unable to offer safe care to their child/ren.

However, if the extent of a parent's own needs mean that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services is required.

'Drugs' in this context refers to all drugs including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.

If an adult with parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care, steps must be taken to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child.

If concerned about ability to care for the child based on the factors above, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services is required.

Appendix 1

Dear Parents/carers,

Re: Children walking home

The welfare and security of your child is paramount and all possible and practical policy and procedures have been implemented to ensure these remain a priority.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, if you wish for your child to travel home from school alone, please fill out the consent form below and return it to school. Please note, as stated in our policy, we only allow children to walk home alone who are in year 5 and 6.

Yours sincerely

Miss R Burke
Pupil welfare manager

Children walking home

I give permission for my child _____ Class _____

to walk home unaccompanied at the end of the school day.

Print name _____ (parent/carer)

Signed _____ (parent/carer)

Date _____

Appendix 2

Dear Parents/carers,

Re: Sibling collection request

If you require an older child to collect one or two younger siblings, then we do require you to fill in a consent form so that we have your written permission.

We do not allow pupils to collect other pupils without consent and we have maximised the number of children that can be collected by a sibling to two.

If the school has any concern that older siblings are not competent to take younger siblings from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements, this request may be declined. In which case the parent/carers or another responsible adult will need to collect the child/ren.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss R Burke
Pupil welfare manager

Sibling collection

I give permission for my child _____ class _____
to collect the following younger siblings from school at the end of the school day. I
understand this does not extend to after school activities;

Name _____ Class _____

Name _____ Class _____

I understand that this is my own decision and that the school is not responsible for my
children once they have been released.

Print name _____ (Parent/carers)

Signed _____ (Parent/carers)

Date _____