



Wallscourt Farm Academy
Policy on safeguarding learners
walking to and from school alone

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.

Learners in EYFS (Oak) or KS1 (Years 1 and 2)

Our agreed school policy is that no learner 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 learners to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

Learners will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the family that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by email.

If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified their identity.

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

If the child is not collected and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we will consult with family services.

We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

Learners in Years 3, 4 and 5

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own, we believe that learners in year 3, 4 and 5 should be still brought to and collected from school and this is our school policy.

Learners in Year 6

For learners in Year 6, we believe that you as a family need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school 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 school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are many ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are driven to school do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they start to walk to school independently.

Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. The best way to do this is to walk with your children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road, learning how to navigate and a host of other skills. This helps them gain the experience and confidence to deal with traffic and way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Teach your child to:

- ✓ Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- ✓ Always cross at the intersection 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 parked cars or bends in the road.
- ✓ Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming; cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- ✓ Look out 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 be cautious.
- ✓ Never, ever, follow someone who is either a stranger or someone they know but is not a designated "safe" adult. Speak to your child about what they should do if this should ever happen

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?
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 did not want to do?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know whom best to approach to get help?

Making an informed decision

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 year 6 child is ready for this responsibility, then you must inform the school in writing or by completing the form below.



(24-25)

Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to accompany them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after school club it may be dark when the club finishes.

Learners attending an after school club or returning to school after 3:15pm due to an educational visit or trip will require additional permission from families to be able to walk home alone.

We will only allow families to give permission for their child to walk home if they live within walking distance. It is not possible to give permission for your child to leave the school premises and wait in the local community to be collected.

On occasions, Wallscourt Farm Academy may contact families once they have given permission for their child to walk home, if we have additional concerns or in order to discuss the arrangements for their child walking to or from school in more detail.

Making an informed decision (continued)

Where children walk to, or walk home from school, alone, we would usually expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive.

If your child will be leaving from, or returning to, an empty house, we would expect that this is only for a short period of time and that your child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.

We would advise that learners either have a house key, a mobile phone or a means of getting a house key in the case of no one being home. Should learners ever feel unsafe, worried or if family members are not home, but they were expecting them to be, we would expect that your child knows to return to WFA to seek help.

Additional considerations - Walking to school alone

Wallscourt Farm Academy are not responsible for any learners who come to school alone and arrive on the school premises without an adult. We would therefore expect you to come to school with your child and supervise them while waiting in the garden.

The only exception to this is learners in Year 6 who have written permission from their family to walk to and from school independently.

Unless booked into and attending breakfast club, Wallscourt Farm Academy is not responsible for any child who arrives alone or is left in the garden until they are welcomed into school by the teaching team at 08:45.

If at any time you need to change arrangements you have made, please ensure you let us know in writing immediately.

Permission for Year 6 learners to walk to and from school unaccompanied



(24-25)

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to the Welcome Zone or complete the online form.

Name of child:..... Year: 6

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis. I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in 'Policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone'.

I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to and from school alone, the school is not responsible for:

- my child's actions or whereabouts before my child is welcomed at breakfast club or welcomed by the teaching team at 08:45.
- my child's actions or whereabouts once they have been released by the teaching team at the end of the school day.

Signed.....

Date:

[Name print].....

