



Priestsic Primary and Nursery School

## **SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY**

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."

### **Introduction**

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel. In addition, as a school we have a duty of care for the safety and well-being of our children and therefore this policy is to help advise parents/carers in the decisions they make for their children in relation to safety to and from school, taking into careful consideration the proximity of the school to two busy main roads and the access to the school on a footpath which is also a designated cycle path.

We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

In order to safeguard our pupils at Priestsic Primary and Nursery School, it is essential that the school ensures all children arrive at and leave school at the end of the day with a safe adult. We appreciate that for many families, arrangements need to be flexible and it may be that a few people care for the child after school. Sometimes there will be 'one-off' arrangements. For this reason, we have set out clear procedures, which all staff and parents/carers must adhere to.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age. Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes any person with parental authority over the child concerned e.g. carers, legal guardians etc.

### **Pupils in Foundation Stage (Nursery/F1 and F2) or KS1 (Years1 and 2)**

Our agreed school policy is that pupils in **Foundation Stage (Foundation 1 and Foundation 2) or Key Stage 1 (Years1 and 2)** should **NOT** 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 16 years old or older) who are on the school data form. 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 also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements. If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity.

If no one collects a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents/carers will be contacted. We will not allow older brothers and sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

## Pupils in KS2

### Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore, with regards pupils in KS2, we believe that you as parents/carers need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility. The primary driver in making such decisions is always the safety and wellbeing of our children. As a school, we would highly recommend that children in **Years 3 / 4 and 5** should still be brought to, and collected from, school by an adult.

### Year 6 Pupils

For pupils in Year 6, we believe that if children **live within walking distance to school and are able to walk a safe route** then you as parents 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 lots of 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.

One way is to follow them a few times on their journey so you know how safe and sensible they are. It is strongly advised that children who are walking without an adult should have a mobile phone that they are able to use if they need help. All mobile phones bought into school need to be handed into the classteacher immediacy in line with our Mobile Phone, Devises and Smart Watch Policy.

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. (A safe adult is someone who has been previously agreed upon by you and your child to be safe, such as a grandparent or trusted neighbour). And if that person tries to convince him/her to go with him/her or tries to physically get close to him, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or, "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as they can.

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

1. Do you trust them to walk to school or straight home, using the agreed safe route?
2. Are there roads to cross on the route and how busy/safe are those roads?
3. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend or a group of friends?
4. Are they road safety aware?
5. Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
6. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
7. Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick or fight)?
8. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
9. Would they know who best to approach to get help?
10. Do they understand about keeping themselves safe and not to make any dangerous choices, either by themselves or with a group of friends?

**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 letter or by complete the agreement form below (also available from the school office or website). Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. These permissions only apply to children leaving school at the end of the school day: any child leaving school early (e.g. for medical reasons/unplanned school closure) or leaving school later than normal home time (e.g. after-school event) must be collected by a responsible adult.

If any child does not arrive home within a reasonable timeframe, parents/carers must immediately notify the school in order for appropriate action to be taken.

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 them to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.**

**IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE, PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.**



## Walking to and from school – Year 6

Dear Parents/Carers,

We understand that parents/carers may wish to allow their child in Year 6 to walk home from school unaccompanied, with the informed decision that they are responsible for their child's safety on their way to and from school, even when they are not physically present.

As you will appreciate, the safety of pupils is our main concern, and so I would like to share the following points:

- Pupils in Years 6 may walk to and from school with written permission from parents/carers (see the Walking Home agreement).
- Parents are responsible for informing the school immediately should their child be unwell or otherwise unable to attend school. This includes informing the school prior to taking their child for any early morning medical examinations (e.g. doctor or dentist) which may cause their child to miss registration in the morning and arrive in school later than 8.50am.
- We understand that you may wish for your child to carry a mobile phone if walking home unaccompanied, and this will be permitted. For safeguarding reasons, mobile phones must be switched off and handed to the class teacher each morning to be stored securely. All property must be clearly named.
- Year 6 pupils attending after school clubs/after school events ie discos/Year 6 Leavers Party must be collected by a responsible adult, and are not permitted to walk home unaccompanied.

If you wish for your child to walk home unaccompanied, please complete the form below. If you wish to discuss this topic further, please feel free to contact your child's Class Teacher.

Yours sincerely

J Small

Co-Headteacher



## Priestsic Primary and Nursery School

### Walking to and from school agreement Permission for Y6 pupil to walk to and from school unaccompanied

#### Please tick the boxes below

- I have read and understood this policy on safeguarding my child walking to school.
- I have read and understood this policy on safeguarding my child walking home from school alone.
- I give permission for my child to walk to and from school unaccompanied each day at 3.20pm.
- I fully understand that my child is my responsibility outside of school hours (walking to and from school).
- I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my child gets to and from school safely including getting to school on time. If circumstances change then I will communicate this immediately with school.
- I fully understand that if they are at an extracurricular activity/after school event such as a disco, they should always be collected by an adult.
- I fully understand that if my child brings a mobile phone to school, it must be handed to the class teacher during registration for safeguarding reasons.
  
- I fully understand that the mobile phone will be the responsibility of my child at all other times.
  
- I will notify school immediately should this arrangement change
  
- I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the 'Policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone'.

Name of child: .....

Class: .....

Signed: .....

Name (print): .....

Date: .....

Relationship to child: .....