

# St Peter's Church of England Junior School

## Walking Home Alone Policy

<b>Name of Policy</b>	Walking Home Alone Policy
<b>Governors Review</b>	September 2024
<b>Governors Next Review</b>	September 2026

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

### Introduction:

**At St Peter's School, the safety and wellbeing of our pupils is our highest priority. To support children who walk home independently, the following policy applies:**

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### 1. Parental Permission

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 arriving to and from school.

- We have a statutory duty to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.
- We will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above. The information about which adults are able to collect is kept on the school information sheets completed by the parent.

Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement.

**Parents or guardians must complete and sign a Walking Home Alone Permission Form at the start of each academic year, giving consent for their child to travel home unaccompanied. This form must be renewed annually.**

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### 2. Responsibility for Records

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all relevant contact details and permissions are kept up to date with the school.

**Any changes must be communicated to the school office promptly.**

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### 3. Curriculum Support

To help children make safe and responsible decisions, the school will embed personal safety and road safety education into the curriculum. These lessons aim to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills needed to travel home safely and confidently.

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#### **4. Legal Guidance on Children Being Home Alone (UK Law)**

**There is no legal age at which a child can walk home or be left at home alone in the UK. However, the law states that children must not be left alone if it puts them at risk.**

According to the NSPCC and government guidance:

- Children under the age of 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time.
- Children under 8 should not be left home alone for any length of time.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child is safe and ready for this level of independence.

**If a child is left alone and it is deemed unsafe, parents could be prosecuted for neglect under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.**

**We strongly encourage parents to carefully consider their child's maturity, confidence, and ability to deal with unexpected situations before allowing them to walk home or stay home unsupervised.**

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**This policy is designed to balance growing independence with safeguarding responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office.**

APPENDIX:

Parent support:

[www.think.direct.gov.uk](http://www.think.direct.gov.uk)

[www.roadwise.co.uk](http://www.roadwise.co.uk)

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 didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick, fight)?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?
9. How will they inform you of their arrival home?
10. What would happen if they did not arrive home in an appropriate amount of time?

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 at this time.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform the school by letter or by completing the slip below. 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 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.

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