



# Guyhirn Church of England Primary School & Pre-school

*Member of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust*

This policy was adopted and ratified on:	22 March 2022
Reviewed in:	March 2023, September 2024 June 2025
To be reviewed in:	June 2026

## Children Travelling from School to Home Policy

### Our Vision

**Agape – To live, to learn, to love together**

Through our Christian values we aim to inspire all of our school community to show equality and tolerance to all in a safe, challenging environment.

Developing resilient, aspirational and compassionate individuals who are enthused by all faiths and lifestyles showing faith and belief in one another.

*“Live in agreement with one another. Do not be proud but ready to mix with everyone. Do not think yourself better than others.” - Romans 12:16*

*“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it out.” - Proverbs 18:15*

*“Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbour as yourselves.” - Matthew 22:37*

### Our Values

We are a small, family centered Church of England Primary School that is committed to promoting our Christian values of Thankfulness, Compassion, Creativity, Peace, Hope, Endurance, Forgiveness, Tolerance, Kindness, Respect, Trust and Friendship each linked with the core value of Love.

We are determined to create an inclusive culture of learning where everyone will be challenged in their thinking, to succeed to the best of their abilities and strive to become lifelong learners.

We will empower our children to become respected citizens to enable them to make valuable contributions locally, globally and to contribute to our world's sustainable future.

## **Overview**

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. This could, theoretically, include the journey to and from school.

Further guidance contained in a small booklet produced by the NSPCC states that children under the age of eight cannot judge speed and distance of moving vehicles. The booklet is very informative and amongst other things has a section for parents on 'Keeping your Child Safe'. For further information please visit the NSPCC website at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The DfE indicate 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 Guyhirn Primary School & Pre-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**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 & Year 4**

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.

### **Years 5 & 6**

Pupils in years 5 & 6 can, with the prior consent of a parent or carer walk home unaccompanied. Only pupils in year 4 are permitted to walk home with an older sibling in years 5 or 6 with the prior consent of a parent or carer. Parents/carers wishing to exercise either of these options should complete **Appendix 1** attached.

## **Assessing whether your child is ready to walk home alone**

As a parent/carers, we all ask ourselves, "At what age should I let my child walk home alone?" The answer unfortunately isn't that straightforward. A child doesn't magically at some predetermined age become confident, assertive, capable and powerful. Ideally, and in reality the development of these attributes is a gradual process of ever-greater challenges during which a child gains experience and autonomy.

## **Drop off and collection by older siblings**

If it is not safe for a child to walk home alone unaccompanied, it is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person.

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, 1993*). 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/drop off younger children, this should be recorded. (Please see attached slip – Appendix 1). 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 the 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 who does not attend Guyhirn primary School, can collect or drop off a younger sibling is from Year 7. The school have the right to refuse any person under this age permission to collect a pupil from the school's premises.

The suitability of a sibling carer 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**

The same procedures for drop off and collection can be applied to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school. Safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will decide on the appropriate response.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues. A member of school staff is always present at school during the clubs and at dismissal. Staff from these organisations complete the school safeguarding training.

### **Right to refuse a parent/carers to collect a pupil**

There are factors that 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 of 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. Please see below for some factors to consider:

- 1) Be mindful of staff safety and the safety of the children in the building
- 2) Talk to the parent and ascertain if they appear safe to be able to offer safe care for their child/ren.

### **Consideration**

- ✚ Appearance of the parent/carer
  - Can they maintain eye contact
  - Can you detect the smell of alcohol or drugs on them?
  - Are they staggering or swaying?
  - Are they speaking incoherently?
- ✚ Personal needs of the parent/carer
  - Are their needs going to compromise their ability to meet the needs of the child/ren?
  - Are there other carers at home who could meet the child/ren's needs and those of the person collecting the child/ren?
- ✚ How do they intend to get home/how did they arrive at school with the child? Is the parent/carer driving? Are they fit to do so?
- ✚ Is the parent/carer in sole care or charge of the child? Can the adult identify another parent or supportive adult to be with them and the child?

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

The school should aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of the Police and Children's Services.

Schools do not have the authority legally, to retain a child against a parent/carer's will, therefore, if this is not possible, then the school should consider ringing for a Police welfare check on the **non-emergency** number, **101**.

There may be occasions where an immediate, **emergency** call needs to be made to the police (i.e **999**), because it is judged that a child or another person (including staff) may be imminently at risk of serious danger. Examples include:

- ✚ An intoxicated parent is behaving violently or is threatening violence such that the belief is that the threats may be carried out thus compromising the immediate safety or care of a child, or;
- ✚ Places others in danger by driving a car whilst unfit through drugs or alcohol.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Provision is made for all children regardless of ability, disability, additional needs, medical conditions, gender, faith, or ethnicity and reasonable adjustments are made in a range of ways. All children have a right to be treated equally and the school will take measures against those who do not abide by this ethos.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Policy and practice is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. Monitoring may take the form of discussions with pupils, parents and staff. Feedback will be given to all staff along with recommendations to inform future policy and planning.

This policy was ratified by the LGB on 15.07.2025

## **Appendix 1**

### **Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied**

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 the 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 go with 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?

If you are not confident about how your child would react then you should seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk home on their own. If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must complete the slip below. Your child will not be allowed to walk home alone if the permission slip has not been completed.

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 in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after school club it may be dark when the club finishes.

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 the 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 the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.

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

**Guyhirn Primary School & Pre-School**

**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied / permission for an older sibling to drop off or collect a pupil / permission for a named child to walk their younger sibling home who is in Year 4**

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school before any of the following arrangements commence.

Name of Child:.....

Year Group: .....

Please tick the box that applies to the permission you are consenting to.

☐ I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on a regular basis. I will notify you immediately in writing should this arrangement change. I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the 'Policy for Children Travelling from Home to School'.

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 once they are not on school premises.

☐ I wish to give my permission for older siblings to collect/drop off younger children.

Name of Older Sibling:.....

☐ I wish to give consent for the above named child to walk their younger sibling home who is in Year 4.

Signed:.....

Print Name:.....

Date:.....