



Travelling To/From School Alone Policy

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Agreed by: Brian Senior: Chair of Governors
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Linked Policies:

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

Exclusions policy

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Watermoor Church of England Primary School's vision is that 'The smallest of seeds... grow and become the largest of plants.' Our Christian values and ethos help children to develop their social and moral code, as they build their sense of uniqueness and self-worth as an individual.



Rationale

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school.

However, **it is against the law to leave a child alone if it puts them at risk.**

The NSPCC recommends that: 'While every child is different, we wouldn't recommend leaving a child under 12 years old home alone, particularly for longer periods of time. Children in primary school aged 6-12 are usually too young to walk home from school alone, babysit or cook for themselves without adult supervision.'

Parents/ carers 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 with responsibility for the safety and welfare of our pupils, we must consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, we also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's safety or welfare is at risk.

The Kingshill Sports Facility Site:

Families should understand that the site in which the school is situated, including the state park, is not owned or maintained by the school. It is a public space, which is an important part of the local community and enjoyed by many residents recreationally.

However, its public nature and isolated location present very real risks of criminal and anti-social activity, including but not limited to:

- alcohol and drug use
- drug-dealing
- county lines <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines/what-is-county-lines>
- bullying and harassment
- aggressive behaviour
- vandalism and trespassing

We have ongoing communication with the police to report incidents such as this, which sadly can and do occur on the site.

Arrangements

Our agreed policy is that pupils in:

- EYFS (Pre-school/Reception)
- Key Stage 1 (Y1 and Y2)
- Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3 and Y4)

are **not** permitted to travel to or from school on their own by foot, bike or scooter, or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.

In addition, staff will hand pupils over to named adults or older siblings provided they are **16 years old or above**. Pupils will not be handed over to any other adults or siblings unless the school has been informed by the parent/ carer that they have made this arrangement.

Parents/ carers are requested to keep the school informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by email to office@watermoor.gloucs.sch.uk

If no one turns up to collect a child, they will be kept in after-school club and parents/ carers or named contacts on the emergency contact sheets will be contacted. You will be invoiced for any wrap-around care provided.

There is **no expectation** that children in Y5 and Y6 should travel to and from school alone. We would always support and encourage children to be collected by a named adult; if you wish for this to remain in place, we will continue to follow all of the arrangements for pick-up as outlined above.

Parents/carers of children who wish their children to travel to school (**arriving on site no earlier than 8:30am**) or travel home unescorted by an adult at the end of the school day (3:15pm), must adhere to the following guidelines:

- It is the parent/carer's responsibility to check the route that their children may travel home in order that they may risk assess the journey
- Crossing of fast roads and travel through secluded areas are to be discouraged. A single route must be agreed and adhered to
- Parents/carers must be certain that their children have an awareness and understanding of road safety and stranger danger
- During winter months, children must be dressed appropriately for the travel home
- There must be someone at home to greet their child on arrival
- If a child has been given permission to play on the skate-park after school, they should be able to contact a parent/carer or emergency contact **immediately** in the event of a medical or safeguarding emergency, and should have left **by no later than 3:45pm**
- Children should not play on the skate-park, or travel to/from school, in the dark; all travel should take place within daylight hours

- Any child must be able to make the journey from door to door within 15 minutes
- If any child does not arrive home within the agreed timeframe, parents/carers must immediately notify the school in order that appropriate action can be taken, which may or may not include contacting the emergency services
- Parents/carers must complete the form via ParentMail giving permission for their child to travel to/from school alone. Pupils will not be allowed to travel home alone without this permission
- If any child is attending after-school club, the same permission applies via the consent to travel home alone form, unless different arrangements are in place e.g. the child is traveling to a different residence. In this case, the parent must make the school aware of these arrangements in advance using the form
- In the event of emergency school closure, children must be picked up from school unless parents/carers contact the school directly via telephone or email and confirm the arrangements, including the residence they are going to, the name of the adult waiting for them there and an emergency contact for the day.

We reserve the right to withdraw permission to travel to/from school alone in the event that the above arrangements are not in place, and will take further action in line with our safeguarding policy if required.

In addition, we will withdraw permission if any of the following occurs:

- We are made aware of any incidents of illegal, anti-social or inappropriate behaviour involving your child whilst unattended before or after school, including whilst at the skate-park
- We are made aware of any safeguarding risks posed to or by your child whilst unattended before or after school, including whilst at the skate-park
- We discover that your child does not have adequate safety arrangements in place should they find themselves in danger i.e. they don't have a mobile phone with them or they cannot reach any identified emergency contacts despite calling/texting
- If your child is waiting outside school **before 8:30am, or after 3:45pm**, we will contact you for immediate collection or invite your child to attend wrap-around care, for which you will be invoiced.

Again, we may need to take action in line with our Behaviour, Exclusions and/or Safeguarding Policy if one of these occurs.

We have a duty to contact the police and/or social care if your child is deemed to be unsafe.

In the event that we withdraw permission, your child must be dropped off and collected to/from school every day until we can be assured that the necessary safety arrangements are in place.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

APPENDIX I

To help you make the right decision for your child and family, you may find the following links helpful:



<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/3271/home-or-out-alone-guide.pdf>



<https://www.firstnews.co.uk/talking-points/tips-and-advice/top-tips-for-children-walking-to-school-alone/>