



# St Mary's Hampton

## Church of England Primary School

# Policy for children travelling to and from school independently

Updated by co-headteacher & reported to Local Governing Committee Spring 2025

Review Frequency: Two Yearly

Next Review: Autumn 2027

### **Context**

There are no laws around age or distance, for children walking to and from school independently. 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 children and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring their safety. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare to be at risk.

### **Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1**

Our school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage 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 children to known adults. 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 the school is kept informed of any changes in arrangements, either by email or telephone. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

### **Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)**

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon maturity and confidence. Therefore, for children in KS2, we believe that parents need to decide whether children are ready for this responsibility. We strongly recommend that children in year 3 and 4 are still brought to and collected from school. In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school, parents and carers should assess any risks associated with the

route and the child's confidence. Parents and carers should work with children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are lots of ways children can be prepared 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 children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road, learning how to navigate and a host of other skills. This helps children 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. Children could start to make independent journeys to and from school in pairs or groups.

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, or a clear and safe means of crossing; 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 drivers may not see them, even if they can see the driver.
- Remember it is hard to judge the speed of a car so be cautious.
- Avoid contact with or from unknown third parties, be they adults or other children or young people

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?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know whom best to approach to get help?

If parents and carers are not confident about how their child would react then they should seriously consider whether children should be allowed to walk on their own. If parents and carers decide that children are ready for this responsibility the school must be informed by letter/email

or by completing the slip below. Children will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. Children will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. Should their behaviour not be acceptable, parents and carers will be asked to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

IF AT ANY TIME PARENTS AND CARERS NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, PLEASE ENSURE THE SCHOOL IS INFORMED IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.

**Mobile phones**

While we fully acknowledge a parent’s right to allow their child to bring a mobile phone to school if they walk to and from school without adult supervision, St Mary’s does not allow mobile phones to be brought to school for any other reason.

When a child needs to bring a phone into school, a permission slip (below) must be signed by the parent and the phone must be handed to the class teacher and left in the classroom in a locked drawer at the start of the day and collected at the end of the day. Parents are advised St Mary’s accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones, which are brought into school or school grounds.

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**St Mary’s Hampton Church of England Primary School**

Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school a.s.a.p.

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

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to / from school independently on a regular basis.

My child will bring a mobile phone into school. My child is aware the phone must be handed to the class teacher at the start of the school day.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change. I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in this ‘Policy for children travelling to and from school independently’.

Signed.....(Name: .....) Dated: .....