

ST ANNE'S C.E. (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Safeguarding Pupils

Drop Off and Collection Policy

Policy on the Drop Off and Collection of Children

This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with existing safeguarding policies in the school, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2015), Keeping Children Safe in Education (May 2016)

References to parents in this policy can mean a parent or carer.

This policy relates to situations where

- Parents/carers wish their child to walk to/from school independently;
- Parents/carers wish to provide drop off/collection by an older sibling;
- There are concerns about a parent/carer's ability to offer safe care;
- Children are collected late, not collected or wish to change the arrangements for collection at the end of the day.

We prefer all children to be collected every day by a responsible adult.

1. Pupil walking to/from school independently

The most important factor to consider about suitability of a child walking to / from school alone is any risk to the child. There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. It is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk and therefore schools have a continual obligation to take action if they believe this is the case.

If parents/carers wish to let their child travel to/from school independently, then they must assess the risks associated with the school route and their own child's confidence, and should meet with the school or have a telephone conversation to discuss the school's view. An example of where this may happen is where parents want to increase the independence of their children as they prepare to leave primary school and move onto secondary school. In other circumstances the school might identify alternative options, e.g. another parent taking the child home. If the school is in agreement for the child to make their own way home, the school will ask the parent to complete the permission slip in *Appendix 1*, ensuring that this is reviewed regularly.

Parents should work with their children to build up their independence while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. The responsibility for their child's safety rests with parents and carers who choose for them to walk independently to / from school.

We take the advice from the NSPCC on leaving a child at home,

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/leaving-child-home-alone/>

- Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone;
- Children under the age of 12 are rarely mature enough to cope in an emergency and should not be left at home alone for a long period of time;
- Children under the age of 16 should not be left alone overnight;
- Parents and carers can be prosecuted for neglect if it is judged that they placed a child at risk by leaving them at home alone;
- A child should never be left at home alone if they do not feel comfortable with this, regardless of their age;
- If a child has additional needs, these should be considered when leaving them at home alone or with an older sibling;
- When leaving a younger child with an older sibling think about what may happen if they were to have a falling out - would they both be safe?

School policy for children to walk home independently is that:

- Children must be in Y5 or Y6.
- It is the parent's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order that they may make an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing of fast roads, walking through secluded areas is to be discouraged. A single route must be agreed.
- Parents must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger. It is parent's responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently happy that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey safely.
- During winter months and/or inclement weather, children must be dressed appropriately.
- Children should preferably walk in a group and not alone.
- Children should know their home phone number (plus one other emergency contact) and either have their own mobile phone or money for a phone box.
- There must be someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- Any child must be capable of arriving home within 30 minutes of the end of the school day (3.15pm). Journeys over 30 minutes are not considered appropriate for children to walk at this stage.

The same applies for children being collected from extra-curricular activities.

2. Drop off/collection by an older sibling

There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child but 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, 1933). Parents/carers are therefore responsible for anything that should go wrong in their absence. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) and the NSPCC do not advise for someone under the age of 16 to look after young children.

If parents wish older siblings to drop off / collect younger children they must meet with the school to discuss the situation and if this is agreed the permission slip needs to be completed to confirm the procedure, as above. 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 any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements, this will be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of collection) and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral may be made to Children's Services where necessary.

School policy for children to be collected by an older sibling:

- Children in the Early Years (Nursery and Reception) and KS1 (Y1 and Y2) must not be collected by anyone under the age of 18.
- Children in Y3 to Y6 must not be collected by anyone below the age of 14.

3. Parent/carers ability to offer safe care

If the school has a concern that the parent/carer is using drugs/alcohol and therefore may not be able to provide safe care for their child/children the school will speak with the parent/carer to inform them of the concerns and monitor the situation. 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 via MASH will be made.

If an adult with parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care, one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads will speak with the parent/carer to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child.

The school will aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of Police and Children's Services but schools do not have the authority legally to retain a child against a parent/carer's will. If a parent/carer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol and takes the child/children off site the school will then ring for a Police welfare check on the non-emergency number, 101.

4. Late collection/ non-collection

We do not expect any child to be collected late. If a parent/carer is delayed for any reason it is the parent/carer's responsibility to call an authorised adult to collect the child/children from school on their behalf. The school office will not make these calls.

The school procedures covering the collection of pupils at the end of school are to ensure children are safe and in the care of the parent or an authorised adult by 3.15pm. The school must have the full contact details of parents/carers and other adults [such as grandparents] authorised by the parent/carer to collect their child. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure contact details are up to date and that they have sufficient authorised adults for a range of emergencies. The following procedure will apply for collection of children:

- Children in the Nursery should be collected from 12.00pm.
- Children in Reception and Key Stage One are to be collected directly from school staff from 3.15pm at the classroom door.
- Children in Key Stage Two are to be collected from the class teacher in the designated area of the school playground from 3.15pm.
- The responsibility is on parents/carers to complete these arrangements every day, including the responsibility to make their own arrangements with their named authorised adult to collect their child/children if they are going to be late for any reason.
- In the event of an emergency the school expects the parent/carer to make appropriate arrangements so the child/children are collected by 3.15pm by an authorised adult.
- It should be a rare occasion when there is a need to call the school to inform them that a child/children will be collected late.
- Children not collected at 3:15pm will be placed in our after-school care and an emergency care charge will be applied. Parents will be notified by text message that your child has been taken to Care Club.
 - The charge for Emergency Care is £7 and subject to annual review.
- If a parent/carer or an authorised adult has not collected the child/children from the school by 3.30pm on more than two occasions advice may be sought from Social Care.



Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied

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

Name of child:

Year Group:

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

I confirm that my child is suitable to walk home, knows how to keep him/herself safe and is able to deal with emergencies.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the Drop Off and Collection Policy.

Signed..... Date: (d/m/y)/...../.....

Print Name.....

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