

Yorke Mead Primary School
Safeguarding Pupils Walking To and
From School Alone Policy
September 2026



Our School Vision Statement
BRINGING LEARNING to LIFE

We are a school dedicated to creating an environment where children are able to grow into happy, well-rounded individuals with a love of learning through which they can achieve to the best of their abilities.

We want our pupils to enter the wider world as

- Happy, positive individuals*
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution*
- Confident, resilient, healthy & life-long learners.*

DARE TO...

D - Determination

A - Ambition

R - Resilience

E – Enjoyment

T - Trust

O - Openness

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. 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 pupils and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage One should walk to or from school on his or her own, or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are of secondary age (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

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 you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably in writing. If someone turns up to collect your child, and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If the child is not collected and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer or other listed contacts on record, we will consult with family services.

We will not allow older brothers or sisters in primary school to collect younger siblings.

Pupils in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own, we believe that pupils in year 3 and 4 should still be brought to and collected from school and this is our school policy. We also believe that Year 5 children should be brought to school and collected at the start of the year but understand that in the summer term some Year 5 children may be ready to be more independent, depending on where they live. We also understand that children in key stage 2 may be ready to be dropped at the school gates and walk into school independently.

With regards to pupils in Year 6 (and the summer term of Year 5), we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone. In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are many ways you can prepare your child 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 your children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road, learning how to navigate and a host of other skills. This helps them gain the

experience and confidence to deal with traffic on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Ensure that if they have a mobile phone, they understand the dangers of looking at their phone when crossing roads and walking along the paths etc. This is by far the biggest distraction children have.
- Always cross at the crossing where there is that option; do not cross in the middle of the road.
- 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; look and listen for traffic coming; cross while continuing to keep an eye on 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, follow 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.
- Ensure they know that if anything is not as they expect, such as the person meeting them is not where they expect or no one is in when they get home, that they return directly to school and go straight to the school office to find an adult.

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 on their own.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility and you wish them to walk home from school or out of school to a designated meeting point, then you must inform the school 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 them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after-school club it may be dark when the club finishes. IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY

Meeting Your Child In The School Grounds or Meeting At The Gate

As your child progresses through key stage two, you may feel they are ready to walk to meet you either at the classroom of a younger sibling; at a pre-arranged meeting point in the school grounds or at the gate. This is a good way to start to build independence. It is important that you know you can trust your child to not wander from the meeting point or leave the school grounds before you decide to do this. Staff cannot supervise this stage.

If you feel this is an appropriate step, please inform the class teacher **in writing** of your decision, including where you will be meeting your child. Please ensure your child knows that if you are not there, they should return to their classroom or go directly to the school office to wait for you. Please note that once you have given permission it will be assumed this is a regular pattern unless you withdraw the permission.

School also reserves the right to remove this opportunity and request parents collect from the classroom should there be concerns about your child's behaviour or safety.

You can email admin@yorkemead.herts.sch.uk and mark the email FAO your child's class teacher.

Yorke Mead 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

Name of child:

Year group:

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis. I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change. I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in 'Policy on safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone'.

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 the school premises.

I have explained to my child what to do to stay safe if I am not at the meeting point agreed.

Signed.....

Date:

[Name print].....