Codicote C of E Primary School
Policy for pupils walking to and from school
Written October 2025

This policy has been written to provide guidance for families and staff regarding pupils walking to and from school. 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 prevent independent travel. As a school we are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of our pupils and therefore have to consider what we believe is appropriate practice for ensuring this. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

Children in Nursery to Year 4

Our school policy is that all pupils in Nursery to Year 4 should walk to and from school with an adult, and not be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. We will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above (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).

We ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably in writing; pupils will only be handed over to other people when the school has been informed by the parent that there is a change from the usual practice. If someone arrives to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified the situation with you. If no one arrives to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6

For pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, we believe that parents need to decide whether their child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone. In deciding this, you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence.

Before allowing your child to walk to/from school alone, we suggest you teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming; cross while keeping 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.

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 decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, please inform the school by letter or by completing the slip below. This is necessary for us to allow your child to walk home without adult supervision.

Behaviour

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.

If your child has permission to walk home without adult supervision, we will allow them to leave at the end of the day. Once permission has been given, please ensure they are aware of which days you wish them to wait for you and the days you wish them to walk home alone.

Dark Evenings

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.

Who is at home

Where children walk to, or walk home from school, without adult supervision, 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 very short period of time, and that the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed. If there is any issue, we expect the child to return to school, where we will keep them safe and contact parents/carers.

Breakfast Club and 326 After School Club

We expect all children to be brought to Breakfast Club by an adult, and collected by an adult from 326 After School Club. This safety measure releases your child to a designated adult, ensuring they are not left unattended or with unauthorised people.

……..

Codicote C of E 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: 5/6 (delete as applicable)

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on a 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 pupils walking to and from school'. I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to and from school alone, the school is not able to be responsible for my child's actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.

Signed……..... Date: …….

[Name print]…….....