



## **Minishant PS**

### **Policy on Safeguarding Pupils when: Walking Home to and from School Alone (Parental Permission Slip and Advice)**

Although there are no laws around the age or distance of children 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, at our 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 Primary 1**

Our school policy is that no pupil in Primary 1 should walk to, or from school, on their own or be left on their own on the school premises before 8.45am.

In addition, we will only hand over Primary 1 pupils to named adults.

#### **Pupils in Primary 2-7**

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore, as regards to pupils in Primary 2-7 we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.



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We would still highly recommend that our children are brought to and collected from school by an adult, in particular in Class 1.

If your child is in Class 1 and you would like them to come to and from school independently, please complete and return the form, attached.

#### **Parental request for a child in Class 1 to walk to/ from school alone**

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk home from school you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. Work with your child/ren to build up their independence through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are lots of ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are mainly driven around, may not have road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they walk to or from school independently.

#### **Teach your child to:**

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always 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 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



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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 or sibling(s)?
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 (scream, shout, attract attention)?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?
9. Consider hi-vis clothing/reflectors.

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 then you must complete the slip below.

If at any time you need to change arrangements, please ensure you let the school know by contacting the school office.

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#### **Minishant Primary School**

Permission for Class 1 pupil to walk to/ from school unaccompanied.

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

Name of my child(ren):

.....Primary.....

.....Primary.....

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

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

Signing this slip signifies that I have read and understood the guidelines and reasonable precautions set out our 'Policy on Safeguarding Pupils: Walking to and from School Alone'.

**I accept full responsibility for my child's safety and wellbeing in making the decision that my child should walk to/from school alone.**

Signed.....

Date: .....

(Name print).....