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# Walking Home Policy



**WATERTON**  
ACADEMY TRUST®

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## 1. Our School

### 1.1 Our Vision

**Grow. Achieve. Shine** – These are much more than words or a motto. At Churchfield Primary School we enable all children to **grow** as independent learners, **achieve** more than they ever believe they could and **shine** as unique individuals. Our school is a very special place, having been the beating heart of our community for over 120 years, we respect the lessons of the past whilst looking to the difference we can make in the future. Preparing our pupils for life in an ever-changing world, developing curious, well-rounded individuals who are determined to succeed.

### 1.2 Our Values



We are proud, and work hard to be the best that we can be



We are determined and resilient, embracing all challenges



We collaborate well, treating everyone as equals



We are honest, kind and show integrity



We respect all people, property and the environment



We believe in ourselves and strive for our goals

### 1.3 Our Golden Rule

## Our Golden Rule

We keep ourselves, and each other, safe.



### 1.4 Our School Aims

Our school aims are underpinned by our values. Through our school values, we aim to:

1. Promote high standards of academic and vocational achievement for every child, every time, through a highly-inclusive approach.
2. Promote a holistic view of the whole child, supporting them to become well-rounded individuals and members of society.
3. Encourage all children to develop positive relationships with, and respect for, themselves, each other, our local community and the wider world.
4. Provide a safe, welcoming and positive environment for our children and families; acting as a hub at the heart of our community.

### 1.5 Our Community

Bricks and mortar do not make a school, people do. We can achieve great things when we work together, and our community is at the heart of what we do. We are a hub of support for our families, and provide a safe and loving environment for our children to shine.

### 1.6 Our Academy Trust

Since December 2019 we have been a proud member of Waterton Academy Trust, providing even more opportunities for our pupils to shine. As part of the Waterton family, we ensure that success for all is not a goal, but an expectation.



## 2. Policy Summary

### 2.1 Policy Introduction

Walking home from school without adult support is something that many parents enquire about. As with everything that we do, safeguarding and protecting our pupils is the number one priority. However, we also recognise the benefits that this can have for both pupils and families in terms of independence and ease.

### 2.2 Policy Aims

This policy is underpinned by the central aims of Churchfield Primary School and the values held by the school community. This policy aims to:

- Provide information for all stakeholders on situations when school allows pupils to walk home without an adult.

### 2.3 Policy Rationale

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 to and from school. 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.

### 2.4 Inclusivity Statement

At Churchfield Primary School we use an inclusive approach to all aspects of education. Our aim is to always involve all children and stakeholders in all areas of the curriculum and school life. In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, we recognise that this may mean making special adaptations or arrangements from time to time for children with specific disabilities. We welcome the involvement of disabled adults in all areas of school life.

## 3. Legalities & Linked Documents

### 3.1 Linked School & Trust Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and other linked policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND & Inclusion Policy
- Rewards & Behaviour Policy

### 3.2 Linked National & Local Documents

The policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Code of Practice



## 5. Pupils in FS2, Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2

Our school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & Year 2) or Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 & Year 4) should walk from school on his or her own or be left on their own in the school playground either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings (in secondary school or college) as instructed by parents (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 parents keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter, phone call or face-to-face conversation. If someone arrives to collect a child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity. If no-one arrives 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, we will consult with social care. On the whole, we do not allow older siblings in school to collect younger children, but this can be discussed on a case-by-case basis by contacting school.

Whilst we do not allow pupils other than Year 5 or 6 to walk home, we can make exceptions for Year 4 pupils in exceptional circumstances. However, this must be discussed and agreed in person with either the Wellbeing Manager (Mrs Phillips) or Headteacher (Mr Bean). We reserve the right to decline a request for a Y4 pupil to walk home if we deem the pupil to be at risk.

## 6. Pupils in Upper Key Stage 2

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk home on their own, we believe that parents need to decide whether their child is ready for the responsibility of walking home from school alone when they reach Year 5 or Year 6.

In deciding whether a child is ready to walk home from school, parents should assess any risks associated with the route and the child's confidence. Parents should work with their children to build up their independence while walking from school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. There are many ways that parents can prepare children to make an independent journey.

Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills and prepare a child for secondary school. The best way to do this is for parents to walk with their 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 and way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

## 7. Parent Responsibilities

Parents should teach their child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- 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 and walk straight across.
- Remember that drivers may not see them, even if they can see the vehicle.
- 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 a child is ready for this responsibility, parents may 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 who to approach to get help?

If parents are not confident about how their child would react then they should consider whether their child is ready for the responsibility.

## 8. Registering to Walk Home

If parents decide that their child is ready for this responsibility then school must be informed using the online form, by phone call or in person. The online form will be open for the first two weeks of the academic year and then close. After this point, parents must contact school. Staff will not release children to walk home under any circumstances without prior notice from parents. Staff will not accept messages from pupils. When a pupil has been registered to walk home, they will be added to a central spreadsheet stored in the Safeguarding folder. It is the responsibility of staff to check this sheet regularly.

## 9. Pupil Behaviour

Pupils are responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school, and when walking home. Should their behaviour not be acceptable, or bring the school into disrepute, parents will be asked to accompany them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

## 10. After-School Clubs

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Parents will need to bear in mind that if they are attending an after-school club it may be dark when the club finishes. Due to the shorter days, pupils will not be allowed to walk home from after-school clubs during Autumn and Spring.

If at any point there are changes to arrangements, it is the responsibility of parents to inform school as soon as possible.

