Henry Chichele Primary School

Drop off, Collection and walking to and from School Alone Policy

October 2025

Aim

The aim of this policy is to create a robust approach to safeguard the pupils in our care both before and after school as far as reasonable and practical.

The safety of the children is paramount. This policy is in place to ensure that the responsibilities and expectations of all parties are clear when it comes to children entering and leaving the school premises.

The beginning and the end of the school day is a very busy time, and our aim is to ensure children are dismissed carefully, under strict supervision, collected on time and arrive home safely.

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we aim to resolve the situation as quickly as possible to cause as little distress as possible to the child. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be aware of procedures being followed.

Rationale

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools and FE colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In addition, those bodies must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in considering what arrangements they need to make for the purpose of that section.

Safeguarding arrangements will include consideration of the procedures for dealing with children who are late to be collected or are not collected at the end of a school day/ authorised school activity and where the Governing Body or Proprietor retains responsibility for the use of school premises. It also applies where staff have concerns about effective care by the person collecting the child and the impact of this on the child's safety outside of school, in line with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES 2012 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF 2018.

Other legislation relevant to this guidance:

• Children Act 2004

• Children Act 1989

• Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Occupiers liability Acts 1957 and 1984 This policy should read and applied in conjunction with the school's child protection policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

• Governors: ensure that this policy is reviewed in a timely manner, either before the review date stated in the policy or before if legislation changes sooner.

• Head teacher/ SMT: ensure that the policy is adhered to by all stakeholders

• Office Staff: ensure accurate record keeping, as detailed later in this policy.

• Class teachers: ensure that any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children before or after school are reported promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL

• Class teachers ensure that all children walking home have the correct consent on file and that any messages regarding the child's journey home have been shared with the appropriate parties.

• Parents /Carers: ensure that they communicate effectively with school with regard to contact details and arrangements for the care of their child before and after school as necessary.

• Parents /Carers: ensure that pupils are not left unattended before 8:30am as staff are not on duty until 8:30am when they open the gate.

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, however, to leave a child alone if it places them at risk and therefore schools have a continual obligation to alert relevant authorities if they believe this is the case.

This could, theoretically, include the school journey. The NSPCC advise the following:

• Learning to be independent is an important part of growing up. Between work, appointments and other family commitments. Every parent will have to leave their child home alone at some point so it's good to have a plan in place. Every child is different so build up their independence at their pace and check in with them to make sure they feel safe.

• Infants and young children aged 0-3 years old should never be left alone – even for 15 minutes while you pop down the road. This applies not just to leaving them home alone but also in your car while you run into the shops. • While every child is different, we wouldn't recommend leaving a child under 12 years old home alone, particularly for longer periods of time.

• Children in primary school aged 6-12 are usually too young to walk home from school alone, babysit or cook for themselves without adult supervision. If you need to leave them home, it's worth considering leaving them at a friend's house, with family or finding some suitable childcare

• Keep talking to your child. Whether they're 12 years old or almost 18 years old, there might be reasons that they don't feel safe in the house alone. Just because your child is older doesn't necessarily mean they are ready to look after themselves or know what to do in an emergency. It can help to go over the ground rules and remind them how to stay safe at home.

• Remember – you should never leave a child home alone if they don't feel ready, or if you don't feel they're ready. Sometimes it's just better to leave them with someone – particularly if they're nervous or have complex needs.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/away-from-home/at-school/

Schools are only responsible for safety on the school journey where they have specifically arranged transport.

Walking to and from school independently

If parents/ carers choose to let their child travel to/from school independently, they will be responsible for assessing the risks associated with the school route and their own child's confidence.

If parents/ carers of a child in Year 4 or below would like their child to access school independently they will be required to meet with the school or have a telephone discussion with the school to discuss their individual needs and gain school authorisation.

Parents/carers of a pupil in Year 5 or Year 6 can submit written consent to allow their child to access school independently. See Appendix 1.

Parents are required to 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 most important factor is to consider the suitability of the child walking to/from school alone and if the child is exposed to any risks.

School policy for children to walk home independently is that:

• Children must be in Year 5 or Year 6 and have written consent. Any child below Year 5 or Year 6 must have authorisation from school and written consent from a parent/ guardian with parental responsibility.

• 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 should 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 parents/ guardians phone number (plus one other emergency contact) and it is advised that they have their own mobile phone.

• It is advised that there should 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 (3.30pm). 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. We ask that extra consideration is given to children walking home after extra-curricular activities, especially in the winter months when it is dark. Wherever possible we advise that in these circumstances children are collected from school.

Drop off and collection by older siblings

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person if it is not safe for the child to walk home unsupervised. There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child, however 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). Therefore, parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that will go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

The suitability of an older sibling (aged 16 years or above) caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case- by-case basis, by a judgment of the potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected; the length and nature of the journey home, the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the NSPCC recommend that no one under 16 will be left to care for a younger child.

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

• Children in the Early Years (Reception) and KS1 (Y1 and Y2) must be collected by a person aged 16 years and over.

• Children in KS2 (Y3 to Y6) must not be collected by anyone below the age of 14.

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. A Designated Safeguarding lead will be notified, and they will speak with the parent/carer to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child. 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 who does not have parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care collection will be refused. A parent with parental responsibility will be contacted and required to collect their child from school.

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 offsite the school will ring for a Police welfare check.

Supervision on the school site

Parents should note that the school does not provide a member of staff to supervise children before the gates open at 8.30 a.m. (unless the children are part of the agreed breakfast club or attending a sports club) or after 3:30pm (unless children are attending an after-school club organised by the school or agreed club lead by an external provider) and therefore the welfare of children after that time is the responsibility of parents.

Children should not be dropped off and left on the playground unsupervised. If this happens the children will be placed in the care of a Designated Safeguarding Lead and parents will be contacted.

In these instances, if a problem or difficulty arises and is brought to the attention of the school, the school will intervene, e.g. if a child falls and hurts themselves the school will provide medical assistance.

Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection will be applied to extended school activities. Safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL, who will decide on the appropriate response.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues. The school governing body will ensure that as part of the Premises of Hire agreement, the organisation has confirmed that:

- safeguarding children training has been completed by staff
- a child protection policy is in place
- an appropriately trained designated member of staff is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns.

Late 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.

Children not collected by 4:00pm will be placed in our after-school care and an emergency care charge will be applied. Parent/ carers will be required to collect their child from the After School Club exit.

Henry Chichele Primary School will:

• Check for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.

• Attempt to contact the parents/carers at home/work/mobile phone.

• Attempt to telephone emergency contact.

• Keep a record of incidents where parents/carers are late.

• Send a letter home to the parent/carer notifying them of the possible arrangements that may be put into place for their child if they continue to collect their child late and invite parents in for a discussion about their circumstances if applicable.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility (including siblings, if appropriate and in line with school policy), whether this is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent/carer must put this in writing.

In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent/carer must give verbal or written consent for an agreed person to take the child home.

Concerns about the child's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with our School Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.

Non collection

Parents will be informed that in the event that their child is not collected from school by an authorised adult and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty-five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures, i.e. Police will be informed and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made.

The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken, and calls made and under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them.

If Late or a Non collection is an area of concern a letter will be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put into place for their child and to invite them in for a discussion about their individual circumstances.

Once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain whether there is anything that we could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation.

It may be necessary to discuss with the parent steps that they could take to avoid recurrence e.g. ensuring that we have current contact details etc. It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure that they worked smoothly and if necessary to amend for future incidents.

Special arrangements

If parents/carers are unable to drop off and collect their child in accordance with this policy, they are required to attend a face-to-face meeting with a member of the senior leadership team The purpose of the meeting will be to explore their individual needs and alternative arrangements.

The school will review each case on an individual basis and ensure any alternative drop off and collection arrangements are assessed in line with the suitability for the child and their safety.

Appendix 1- Walking to and from school

Please tick boxes as appropriate

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

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

Brief details of the route my child will take (optional): ----------
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Parental Agreement

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

I confirm that my child understands that if they are worried/ concerned or something has not gone to plan that they should return to school to seek help.

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.

I can confirm I have parental responsibility. I understand that this is my own decision and that the school is not responsible for my child once they have been released.

Child's Name……

Class……

Start Date……

Parent's Name……

Parent's Signature……..

Appendix 2 – Special Drop off and Collection Arrangements

Date:

Dear Parent / Carer I can confirm a special collection arrangement has been discussed between myself, and a member of the senior leadership team on, Date:

Details of agreed arrangement: .....
....
.....
....

I, as the parent, accept full responsibility for their welfare while walking home from school. 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.

I can confirm I have parental responsibility, and I understand that the school is not responsible for my child once they have been released.

Child's Name:

Class:

Parent / Carer:

Parent Signature:

Date:

Staff Member:

Staff members signature: