

# OAKDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Safe Collection from School Policy

Date	March 24
Date of next Review	March 27

## **SAFE COLLECTION FROM SCHOOL POLICY**

Our children's safety is of paramount importance to us all. We will endeavour to ensure clear and robust procedures for collection are in place, regularly reviewed and clearly shared with staff, parents, carers and pupils. The end of the school day is a busy time, and our aim is to ensure children are dismissed carefully, under strict supervision, collected on time and arrive home safely. We have to consider what we believe to be good practice in ensuring the safety of the children and have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from school on their 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 whose details are given to us by parents as pupils join the school. Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement.

### **Walking to and from school independently**

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.
- 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/in-the-home/home-alone/>

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.

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

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 6 and have written consent.
- 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 must 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 home phone number (plus one other emergency contact) and we would recommend they have their own phone.
- There must 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 (3.15pm). Journeys over 30 minutes are not considered appropriate for children to walk at this stage.

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.

The same applies for children being collected from extra-curricular activities.

There will be some occasions where the school stipulates that parents **must** pick up children from school, for example school performances, school events or trips which may finish after the end of the school day.

### **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.

The suitability of an older sibling 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.

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

- Children in the Early Years (Reception) **must** be collected by an adult aged 18 years and over.
- Children in Y1 to Y6 **must not** be collected by anyone below the age of 14.

Written permission from parents/carers will be required for older siblings to collect or drop off younger children and this will be recorded. If we have any concern that older siblings are not competent to take younger siblings to and from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements; this will be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of collection). Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school. This also applies to older siblings who are acting on your behalf. Should their behaviour not be acceptable, you will be asked to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

### **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.

Once a child has been handed over to a named person, they are no longer the responsibility of the school. We ask parents/carers to remain vigilant after collecting their child to ensure they leave the school premises safely.

### **Other safety issues**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children do not access or use any areas of the school site that are prohibited. This includes playing on any outdoor playground equipment such as climbing frames or tyres or playing on the field or trim trail. This equipment is only permitted to be used by pupils of the correct age during the school day and under appropriate supervision. Parents are also expected to ensure their children do not access the staff car park or cross the main drive without adult supervision for their safety.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.

**Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied**

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school as soon as possible:

Name of child:..... Year: .....

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.

Signed ..... (parent) Date: .....



**Permission for pupils to be collected by an older sibling (14 years and above)**

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school as soon as possible:

Name of child:..... Year: .....

Name and Age of sibling collecting.....(name) ..... (age)

I have made the decision that the person named above is responsible for the supervision of my child.

Signed ..... (parent) Date: .....