Guidance on Safeguarding Pupils

Walking to and from School

(November 2020)

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel. 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.

**Pupils in Foundation Stage, KS1 or Years 3 and 4**

As a school we agree that no pupil in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 or Years 3 and 4 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 or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above. 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 you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. **We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.**

**Pupils in Upper KS2 (Years 5 & 6)**

For our pupils in **Years 5 and 6,** 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 **Years 5 and 6** we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child’s confidence. Work with your children to build up their independence while walking to school 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 driven to school do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they start to walk to school independently. Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. The best way to do this is to walk with your 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.

**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 didn’t want to do (i.e. scream, shout)?

7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?

8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

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 inform the school by completing the attached form. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

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 or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

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

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

Declaring consent for your child to walk to and from school unaccompanied is accessible via our online Microsoft Office form named ‘Civitas Academy - Years 5 & 6 Walking to and from School Unaccompanied Consent’, which will be sent via e-mail alongside the policy.