



# Collection from School and Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone Policy

Policy Type:	Safeguarding
Updated:	September 2024
Next Review:	September 2025

# Collection from School and Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone Policy

## 1. Statement of intent

The James Montgomery Academy Trust (thereafter referred to as JMAT) and its schools believes it is essential to ensure all pupils are safe when they leave school at the end of the day. We appreciate that, for many families, arrangements need to be flexible and it may be that several people care for the child after school.

For this reason, we have set out clear procedures that all staff and parents must adhere to, to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

The aim of this policy is to:

Keep children safe

- Ensure all staff members are aware of the correct procedures for the end of the school day.
- Make parents aware of the expectations regarding collecting children.
- Make parents aware of the requirements if they wish their child to walk home from school alone.
- Highlight the importance of parent-school communication.

## 2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2023) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2023) 'Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility'

## 3. General collection procedure

Children must be collected promptly at the end of the school day by a parent/carer or a designated person according to parent/carer instructions. Times will vary through key stages.

If the parent/carer cannot collect a child at the end of the day, school must be informed who is to pick up that day. Should arrangements change during the day the school should be contacted by telephone.

At the end of the school day, children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 must be collected by a parent/carer or designated person who is at least **16 years** of age.

We will not allow older **siblings** in school to collect younger siblings under normal circumstances. Extenuating circumstances must be agreed with the headteacher, and confirmed in writing with the parent/carer concerned, and the log recorded/uploaded to RecordMy.

All children must be collected from After School Clubs by an adult unless written permission is given for the child to walk home.

For Year 5 and Year 6 children who walk home alone, written permission must be obtained from parents in writing (see later section)

No adult other than those named will be allowed to leave the school with a child. In the event that someone else should arrive without prior knowledge, the school will telephone the parent/carer immediately and **the adult will have to wait until we have verified their identity.**

In circumstances where there are safeguarding concerns for a vulnerable child and/or family, then a password system should be used to ensure good safeguarding practice for collecting the child at the end of the school day. Parents should choose a password for the adult allowed to collect the child and inform school of the password. Staff will then only allow the child to be picked up by the adult who uses the required password.

If a child is to be collected **before** the end of the school day, the school must be notified on the same morning. On arrival to school to collect the child the parent/carer will report to the school office. The child will then be brought, by staff, to the reception to be taken home by the parent/carer.

If the parent/carer or alternative nominated adult is going to be late to collect their child, they should let the school know as soon as possible. We will keep children in school until their arrival.

*From time-to-time exceptional circumstances may dictate a move away from the prior agreement of a child walking to/from school unaccompanied e.g. localised safeguarding incidents. In this situation the school will ask parents/carers to make arrangements for the drop of and/or collection by a designated adult until the exceptional circumstances have passed.*

#### **4. Walking to or from school alone**

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to or 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 children. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

**There is no legal age when children are deemed ready to walk to school or home on their own. The NSPCC website advises that the decision of whether a child walks to and from school alone is up to the parent and their best judgement. This decision very much depends on the child's maturity and confidence.**

Knowing that children under the age of eight find it difficult to judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles, and still need help crossing roads, we expect that children from Years 3 and 4 be brought to and collected from school by a responsible person.

Only children from Years 5 and 6 will be allowed to walk home alone. Parents who request that younger children be allowed to walk home alone will be invited in for a discussion with the Headteacher to explore those particular circumstances.

**We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. This must be considered if they are attending an after-school club in the winter months when it may be dark as the club finishes.**

**Where children walk to, or walk home from school, alone, we would usually expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive. If the child will be leaving from, or returning to, an empty house, we would expect that this is only for a short period of time and that the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.**

#### **5. Parent's responsibility**

Parents must decide if their child is ready to walk home from school alone, and assess any risks associated with the route and their child's confidence.

Questions for parents to consider if their child is ready for this responsibility include the following:

- Do you trust them to walk straight home?
- Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
- Are they road safety aware?
- Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
- Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
- 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, kick or fight)?
- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Would they know who best to approach to get help?

If the parents of Year 5 and 6 pupils wish their children to walk home alone the school must be informed of this in writing, a note will then be made on RecordMy.

*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.*

Children being picked up by someone who is suspected to be under the influence or suspected to be impaired by the use of alcohol/drugs.

The following procedure will be followed if any child is picked up by an allegedly impaired person or someone considered to be under the influence of substances:

- If the person picking up a child is, in the judgment of staff, impaired (under the influence of drugs or alcohol) and unable to adequately care for the child, the staff will not release the child to that person.
- The child will be taken to the school office and the DSL will use the contact list to call a relative or friend to pick up the person and child.
- Police and Children's Social Care will be contacted for advice and also referral if appropriate.

## **6. When a child is not picked up**

The following procedures will be followed for any child who is not picked up:

- The child will remain with the class teacher for up to 10 minutes, then taken to the school office.
- The school office will contact the parents by telephone.
- If other contacts are given on the child's confidential sheet, they will be contacted.
- If no contact can be made with parents or the emergency contacts the school will continue to try and make contact for a reasonable amount of time until 4:30pm, at the latest.

After 4.30pm, if we have not been able to make contact then Children's Social Care will be contacted for advice.

Two members of school staff (**which must include a DSL or Deputy DSL**) will remain at school with the child until Children's Social Care make their decision as to whether it is a case of abandonment.

The school will ensure that these protocols have been followed by staff and a note of all calls will be completed on RecordMy.

If a child is frequently not collected on time then a referral will be made to children's social care.

**NO CHILD WILL EVER BE LEFT ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES UNATTENDED.**

## **7. Monitoring, evaluation and policy review**

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the JMAT schools. This policy will be assessed for its implementation and effectiveness annually by the Trust Safeguarding Lead.

## Appendix 1

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

The person with **parental responsibility** must complete and return this reply slip to school as soon as possible before the child first walks home alone.

School:	
Name of child:	
Current class / year group:	

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.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the

#### **‘Collection from School and Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone Policy’**

I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to and from school alone, the school is not responsible for my child’s actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.

Parent / carer signature:	
Parent / carer print name:	
Relationship to child:	
Date:	
Contact number:	