

Maiden Erlegh Trust

# **PROTOCOL FOR COLLECTING CHILDREN & WALKING HOME ALONE**



**MAIDEN ERLEGH**  
TRUST

## **GREAT HOLLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. A family's 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. 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.

In setting our protocol for collecting children we have taken advice from the:

- DfE that states:
  - It is for each school to decide and enforce its own pupil collection policy and request that parents/carers formalise collection arrangements in writing.
  - The school is not responsible for a child's safety on his or her way home.
- NSPCC that states:
  - Children under eight cannot judge the speed and distance of moving vehicles. They still need help when crossing roads.

## All Pupils

- Alternative permission and arrangements for children leaving school at the end of the day will be confirmed in writing by the parent/carers.
- All children must be collected from After School Clubs.
- 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/carers immediately and await their advice.
- If a child is to be collected before the end of the school day, the school is to be notified on the same morning. On arrival to school to collect the child the parent/carers will report to main school reception. The child will then be brought, by staff, to the reception to be taken home by the parent/carers.
- If the person who normally picks a child up is not doing so then a note should be sent to school to inform us who is to pick up that day.
- Should arrangements change during the day, the school should be contacted by telephone.
- If the parent/carers 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.

## Pupils in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 (Years 1&2)

All children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 should be brought into school and directly handed over to the care of school staff and collected at the end of the school day by a known adult or sibling provided they are 16 years old or above.

## Pupils in Key Stage Two (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends on their maturity and confidence. Knowing that children under the age of eight cannot judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles and that pupils under ten are unable to fully manage the wider risks of travelling alone, we expect all Year 3, 4 and the vast majority of Year 5 pupils to be brought to and collected from school.

### Walking Home Alone

We advise parents/carers to think about whether your child is ready to walk to and from school and assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence.

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 self-assurance to deal with traffic and wayfinding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the road; never become distracted.
- Always cross at the intersection where there are traffic lights; do not cross in the middle of the road. Alternatively, 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 cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that drivers may not see a child, even if the child can see the driver.
- 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. (A safe adult is someone who has been previously agreed upon by you and your child to be safe, such as a grandparent or trusted neighbour.) If that person tries to convince the child to go with him/her or tries to physically get close, then shout, 'Help! This is not my dad' or 'Help! This is not my mum' and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch and hit as hard as they can.

When deciding if your child is ready for this responsibility, you might want to consider 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 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 the parents of Year 6 pupils wish their children to walk home alone, the school must be informed of this in writing. If we have no consent for this, children **must** be picked up from the classroom doors as normal.

*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.*

### Procedure that will be followed for any child who is not picked up

- The child will remain with the class teacher for up to 10 minutes or until other pupils have been collected, whichever is sooner.
- After 10 minutes, the child will be taken to the school office. The administrative team in the office will contact the parents by telephone.
- All other contacts on the child's confidential profile will be contacted.
- If no contact can be made with the emergency contacts or parents, the school will continue to try and make contact for a reasonable amount of time until 4.00pm, at the latest.
- After 4.00pm, if we have not been able to make contact, then Social Services will be contacted for advice.
- Two members of school staff (which should include at least one Senior Member of Staff) will remain at school until Social Services 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.
- If a child is frequently not collected on time, then the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be contacted.
- NO CHILD WILL EVER BE LEFT ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES UNATTENDED.

### Procedure that will be followed if any child is picked up by an allegedly impaired person

- If the person picking up a child is, in the judgement 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 Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a Senior Member of Staff will manage the process to call a relative or friend to pick up the person and child.
- If no contact can be made, then Social Services will be contacted for advice.

**IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE, PLEASE  
MAKE SURE YOU LET THE SCHOOL KNOW IMMEDIATELY**

## Permission for Pupils to Walk To and From School Unaccompanied

A person with parental responsibility should complete and return this reply slip to school before allowing a pupil to walk home or fill out the online form found here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/A6tCRKWrrJm>

Name of Child:

Class:

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to and from school on a 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 'Protocol for Collecting Children from School at the End of the Day and Safeguarding Pupils Walking To and From School Alone'.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Relationship to named child: