



Walking Home From School Policy

2025-2026

Document monitoring and evaluation

This policy has been officially adopted by the Governing Body.

Version History		
Version	Date	Description
Initially adopted	Sept 2025	Adopted by Governing Bodies

Approval & Authorisation			
	Name	Job title	Date
Approved by	Gary Hilton	Head teacher	Sept 2025
Approved by	Douglas Watkin	Chair of Governors	Sept 2025
Approved by		Governing Body	Sept 2025
Date of next review			Sept 2026

Policy and Guidance - Safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone.

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

A families' 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 judgment for parents to decide when children can play out on their own, walk to the shops or school."

Below is the Tweed Learning policy for allowing children to independently travel home (or to another specified location).

Pupils in Foundation Stage or KS1 (Year 1 & 2) & Pupils in Years 3, 4 & 5

Our school policy is that **no pupil in Reception, 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 16 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 will not allow older brothers or sisters who attend schools within the Tweed Learning Federation to collect younger siblings.

We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If there has been no contact from parents and the children have still not been collected once the school is closed, the Safeguarding Lead will be contacted and they will decide next steps.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6

There is no age in law when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to and from school unaccompanied, 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 and from school together using route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

Walking to school unaccompanied

We ask that you inform us if your child is walking to school unaccompanied. We will also ask you to confirm the route they will be taking and whether or not they will be travelling with a mobile phone. **You are responsible for ensuring your child's safety on their journey to school.**

Walking home from school unaccompanied

We require your permission to dismiss your child from school without an adult so they can walk home from school unaccompanied. Once you give your permission, we will no longer be responsible for ensuring that your child is with an adult at the end of the school day. **You are responsible for ensuring your child's safety during travel from school and when they arrive home.**

Preparing your child to travel unaccompanied

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 find their way on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Children with SEN

Deciding whether a child with special educational needs should walk home alone will be on a case by case basis. Parents should discuss with the SENCo in the first instance.

Mobile Phones guidance and procedures:

There are benefits to your child traveling with a mobile phone in terms of communication, security and maybe tracking. There are also dangers of carrying something so valuable; if your child has a valuable smartphone, this can be attractive to others and there have been a number of muggings in the local area. Carrying valuable items could make your child more vulnerable, so this will be your choice. We would recommend that if you are providing your child with a phone, it is a very basic model that can only be used to text and call. You also need to ensure you have spoken to them about how to keep it safe and what to do should they be approached by someone who wants it.

Once in school, your child will not be allowed to keep hold of their phone. These will be turned off, handed to their class teacher and placed into a locked draw or room until dismissal. It is the child's responsibility to collect the phone at the end of the

day, not the job of the class teacher to remind them. Please note that, if a child fails to hand in the phone on arrival, they will be given one warning. The 2nd time they fail to hand in their phone, the phone will be taken away and only returned to a parent/family member.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; 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 crossing behind parked cars or on bends in the road.
- Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming; cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that drivers may not see them, even if they 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).

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?
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 slip below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

Absences

You may have told us that your child will travel to school unaccompanied. Please note that while we do not normally contact parents to advise that children have arrived safely at school, we will contact you if your child has **not** arrived, in line with our usual absence practice.

Continuing to ensure your child travels to and from school safely

We reserve the right to withdraw permission in the event that we have concerns about your child travelling home safely, or in the event that your child is ill etc. In such cases we will contact you so that you can put in place arrangements for your child to be collected.

Your child will be responsible for their behaviour whilst on and off the school premises both before or after school. Should their behaviour be deemed a safeguarding risk, you will be asked to accompany them to and from school until they can safely travel to and from school again.

Appendix 1: Letter to parents

Re: Walking to and from school

Dear Parents/Carers,

To help to develop the independence of our Year 6 pupils, they will be able to walk home from school unaccompanied once we receive your permission.

Please carefully read the attached document, Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone, to familiarise yourself with our policy and guidance on keeping your child safe when they are travelling to and from school.

To inform us that your child is walking to school on their own, and if you wish to give permission for your child to walk home from school unaccompanied, please complete the attached permission slip.

If you give permission for your child to walk home from school unaccompanied, we will no longer be responsible for ensuring that your child is with an adult at the end of the school day. You are responsible for ensuring the child's safety during travel and when they arrive home.

Please note that children walking **TO** school unaccompanied may not arrive on site earlier than 08:40 as they are not supervised in the playground.

Travelling home alone is a significant step for many children towards greater independence and we look forward to seeing your child take on this new responsibility.

I _____ give permission for _____

To walk to and from school unaccompanied. I understand once my child is released by school staff and off school premises, their safety is my sole responsibility, and the school has no further liability.

Parent/Guardian's name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____