Policy for children travelling from home to school

Last Reviewed: October 2026

Date of next review : October 2027

"All things are possible with God."

Mark 10:27

Mission Statement:

All things are possible with faith, understanding and forgiveness; everyone can flourish together.

At St Anne's School we want our children to be independent and resilient, but to know that, when things seem overwhelming, there is always a guiding hand available from everyone in our school community. "When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you" (Footprints in the Sand)

Moral of this story: *You're never ever alone, especially during your most trying times. God is always with you. Even if you can't be your own best friend as yet, make sure to acknowledge the fact that God is your best friend always!*

Vision:

We aim to create successful citizens of the future who have a positive growth mind set and are resilient and prepared for their journey through the ever-changing world in which we live.

We aim to do this by:

- Teaching the importance of being compassionate and respectful to others and role modelling the Christian Values, whilst at the same time respecting and recognising the value and importance of other faiths and lifestyles.
- Providing a rich and creative curriculum that inspires a passion for learning and promotes excellence.
- Collaborating and supporting others to achieve their very best; encompassing our school, our homes, our parish, and the wider community.
- Providing a nurturing and safe environment where children can be healthy and happy both physically and emotionally.
- Facilitating investigative learning opportunities through the development of the effective characteristics of learning.
- Promoting philosophical enquiry to stretch and develop analytical thinking and questioning; creating independent and creative thinkers who are resilient and prepared for all life has to offer.

Golden Values:

Community Faith Forgiveness Perseverance Respect

Overview

Guidance tells us that if schools are aware that parents are allowing an older sibling to look after a younger child, it would be good practice to provide information to parents/carers to assist safe decision making about the arrangements.

There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. However, it is an offence 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 journey to and from school.

Further guidance contained in a small booklet produced by the NSPCC states that children under 8 cannot judge speed and distance of moving vehicles. The booklet is very informative and amongst other things has a section for parents on 'Keeping your Child Safe'. For further information please visit the NSPCC website at www.nspcc.org.uk

The DFE indicate that it is for each school to decide on their own pupil collection policy. The school is not responsible for the safety of a pupil once the school day is over and the pupil has left the school premises.

Approach

St Anne`s CE Lydgate Primary School has developed its own policy regarding how it approaches the issue of parents/carers wishing to allow their child/ren to walk home alone or be collected by a sibling or other responsible party. The policy not only reflects the values of the school, but more importantly addresses the safeguarding of our pupils.

Allowing your child to walk home alone

EYFS and KS1

The school **WILL NOT** permit any child below Year 5 to walk home alone. In all circumstances a responsible person, usually a parent or carer, or somebody authorised by a parent or carer and known by the school should collect the child at the end of the school day.

KS2

Pupils in years 5&6 can, with the prior consent of a parent or carer walk home unaccompanied. Parents/carers wishing to exercise this option should complete Appendix 1 attached.

Assessing whether your child is ready to walk home alone

As a parent/carer, we all ask ourselves, "At what age should I let my child walk home alone?"

The answer unfortunately isn't that straight forward. A child doesn't magically at some predetermined age become confident, assertive, capable and powerful. Ideally, and in reality the development of these attributes is a gradual process of ever-greater challenges during which a child gains experience and autonomy.

Drop off and collection by older siblings

If it is not safe for a child to walk home alone unaccompanied, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person.

There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child, however it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. This can include in the care of an older sibling if the level of supervision is 'likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (*Children and Young Persons Act, 1933*). Therefore parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that should go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

If parents have given permission for older siblings to collect /drop off younger children this should be recorded. (Please see attached slip – Appendix 1) If the school has 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 must be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of collection) and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services where necessary.

The school has therefore set out in its policy that the minimum age at which an older sibling can collect or drop off a younger sibling is 15 years of age. The school have the right to refuse any person under this age permission to collect a pupil from the school`s premises.

The suitability of a 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.

Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection can be applied to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school. Safeguarding concerns are reported to Children's Services, who will decide on the appropriate response.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues. The school governing body should ensure that as part of the service level agreement, the organisation has confirmed that:

- level one safeguarding children training has been completed by staff
- a child protection policy is in place

Right to refuse a parent or carer to collect a pupil

There are factors which may affect a parent/carers ability to care for and look after a child/ren and ensure and provide a safe and friendly environment for them.

The use of drugs/alcohol or the presence of mental health difficulties does not in itself necessarily mean that the parents/carers are uncaring, incompetent or unable to offer safe care to their child/ren.

However, if the extent of a parent's own needs mean that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services is required.

'Drugs' in this context refers to all drugs including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.

If an adult with parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care, steps must be taken to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child. Please see below for some factors to consider:
1) Be mindful of staff safety and the safety of the children in the building
2) Talk to the parent and ascertain if they appear safe to be able to offer safe care for their child/ren.

Considerations

- Appearance of the parent/carer
    - Can they maintain eye contact?
    - Can you detect the smell of alcohol or drugs on them?
    - Are they staggering or swaying?
    - Are they speaking incoherently?

- Personal needs of the parent/carer
    - Are their needs going to compromise their ability to meet the needs of the child/ren?
    - Are there other carers at home who could meet the child/ren's needs and those of the person collecting the child/ren?

- How do they intend to get home /how did they arrive at school with the child? Is the parent driving? Are they fit to do so?

- Is the parent/carer in sole care or charge of the child? Can the adult identify another parent or supportive adult to be with them and the child?

If concerned about ability to care for the child based on the factors above, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services is required.

The school should aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of Police and Children's Services.

Schools do not have the authority legally to retain a child against a parent/carer's will; therefore if this is not possible, then the school should consider ringing for a Police welfare check on the **non-emergency** number, **101**.

There may be occasions where an immediate, **emergency** call needs to be made to the police (i.e. **999**), because it is judged that a child or another person (including staff) may be imminently at risk of serious danger. Examples include:

- An intoxicated parent is behaving violently or is threatening violence such that the belief is that the threats may be carried out thus compromising the immediate safety or care of a child, or;
- Places others in danger by driving a car whilst unfit through drugs or alcohol.

Equal Opportunities

St Anne`s CE Lydgate Primary School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protective characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against children/staff or treat them less favourably because of their gender, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. Age and marriage and civil partnerships are also "protected characteristics."

The formulation of this policy is in line with the Equality Act.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy and practice is regularly evaluated. Feedback along with recommendations to inform future policy and planning with be given to all relevant parties.

The school leadership team have a responsibility to ensure the policy is embedded into the school provision and report to governors on the effectiveness of the policy at least every 3 years.

Appendix 1

Dear Parents or Carers of pupils in Years 5 & 6,

The welfare and security of your child is paramount and all possible and practical policy and procedures have been implemented to ensure these remain a priority.

As part of our safeguarding procedures we ensure your child leaves school at the end of the day safely. Please could you fill in the slip below to state how your child will travel home from school and return it as soon as possible. If we don't have your permission for your child to go home on his/her own then we will keep your child in school until a responsible known adult arrives to collect him/her.

If you collect your child from school, could you please come into the school grounds and wait near your child's classroom door. If you are going to be late, then please ring school and we will keep your child until you arrive. It would also help us if you could also name other adults who might, at times, collect your child.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Mr R. A. Learmont
Headteacher

Child's name……. Class ……

☐ I give permission for my child to walk home unaccompanied at the end of the school day

☐ I will collect my child at the end of the school day

Named people who collect my child

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Signed ……..