Children walking/cycling to and from School Alone Policy

Last reviewed: May 2026

Introduction

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure their child arrives safely and promptly to school each morning. Whilst walking to school it is understood that parents/carers ensure that their child takes the safest route possible and is accompanied at all times by a responsible adult.

However, during Years 5 and 6 parents/carers may decide that their child is capable of independently walking/cycling to school; in some cases, to prepare them for Secondary School. If this decision is made, parents/carers make the informed decision that they are responsible for their child's safety on their journey to school, even if they are not physically present.

It is advised that parents/carers ensure their child is fully conversant with road safety, their bike is roadworthy and appropriate safety gear is used.

The following guidelines set out Markeaton Primary School's advice, policy and procedures should parents/carers wish to allow their child to walk to or from school without an adult:

1. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to assess the route on which the child will walk home from school to ensure they are confident their child has the ability to walk home safely, even if their child is accompanied to school by a parent/carer. Crossing busy main roads without suitable pedestrian crossings and walking through secluded areas are discouraged.

2. It is also advised to the parents/carers that their child knows their own home phone number and other emergency contacts and either has a mobile or money for a pay phone should they need to call home in an emergency. Some mobile phones have a GPS tracking system and having an emergency ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in contacts is recommended.

3. Safeguarding is paramount and parents/carers need to ensure their child is fully aware of stranger danger and how to report any concerns to an appropriate adult.

4. Should a parent/carer wish to allow their child to walk to school unaccompanied by an adult, parents/carers must inform the school so that a register can be compiled of key children to identify should a child not arrive at school at the appropriate time in the morning. This can be done in writing or via an email (school office), it must not be done over the phone.

5. The school may refuse a proposal if a child is not deemed able to walk/cycle home alone. For example, if the school has concerns about a particular child's ability to travel safely or if a child lives too far away more than 15 minutes away permission for the child to walk home alone may be refused.

6. There must always be an appropriate adult/parent/carer at home to meet the child on their arrival. Parents/carers need to be aware when walking home/cycling home the school will not know if a child arrives home as planned. Hence the parent/carer needs to ensure adequate safety protocols are in place should an emergency/accident arise.

7. If the school feels the welfare and safety of the child walking/cycling to school is compromised the school may revoke the arrangement and will notify parents/carers accordingly.

8. It is recommended that ONLY children in Years 5 and 6 be allowed to walk to school unaccompanied by an adult and only then if the parent/carer is confident that it is safe for them to do so. However individual cases will be discussed with parents/carers.

9. As the responsible body receiving children from home at the start of the day, the school will ensure that morning registrations are taken in each class. If a child is found to be absent and no prior notice of such absence has been received from the child's parent/carer, the school recognises a clear responsibility to contact the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for absence or highlight that a child has not attended morning registration.

10. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that school is informed should their child be unable to attend school for any reason in accordance with the school attendance policy. If a child who walks/cycles to school unattended is not in school contact will be sought with the parent/carer within 30 minutes or the schools protocol] of morning registration taking place and an absence without reason being noted by the classroom staff.

11. If upon contact it is confirmed that a child has left home with the intention of walking/cycling to school but has not arrived and therefore an issue of a missing child is noted, the school will contact the police immediately. The school's designated senior person for safeguarding/child protection will then be immediately informed and safeguarding procedures for child protection/children missing procedures will be followed.

12. A register of children who have permission to walk/cycle home alone after the school day will be kept by the school.

13. If a child has left the school to walk home but does not arrive home when expected and direct contact with the child has not been established, the parent/carer should contact the school in the first instance to seek clarification from the responsible adult who dismissed their child as to the time they left school. However, the school may not be contactable after home time and therefore it will be parents'/carers' responsibility to notify the police.