



## **TUDHOE COLLIERY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. 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 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.

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3 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 of secondary school age (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

A ParentMail will be sent at the start of each academic year asking parents to list all the people who have permission to collect their child. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements during the year by email. If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity. If no one turns up to collect a child, they will be kept in school and parents contacted. If the child is not collected and we have failed to make contact with the child's carer, we will consult with social services.

Pupils in Years 4, Year 5 and Year 6 are allowed to walk home by themselves once permission has been received from parents. Please note: we will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own, with regards to the children in the top three classes, we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone.

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 many 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 way finding 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 street; never become distracted.
- Use the Crossing Patrol wherever possible.
- 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; 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.
- Think about wearing reflective clothing on dark nights and mornings.

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 them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

**Please Note:** Children in the top three classes with permission to go home alone can only do so at the end of the school day (3:30pm) or from an after school club (finishing at 4:15pm). All children will need to be picked up from Teatime Club, discos, or if arriving back late to school after an educational visit.

Where children walk to, or walk home alone from school, we would 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.