



Parklands
Community Primary
School

**Collecting Children from School and
Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from
School Alone Policy**

Date of Approval: September 2024

Review Date: September 2028

Reviewed by: Headteacher

1. Introduction and Rationale

At Parklands Community Primary School, the safety and welfare of all pupils is our highest priority. This policy outlines the procedures for collecting children from school and the strict circumstances under which some children may walk home alone. It reflects national safeguarding expectations and supports our commitment to protecting children both on and off the school premises.

We recognise that as children get older, they may become more independent. However, we believe that careful consideration, guided by school values and safeguarding advice, is essential in determining when and how children can begin to take on this responsibility.

2. Legal and Safeguarding Context

According to the DfE, there is no legal minimum age for a child to walk to or from school alone. However, schools must decide what they consider safe and appropriate.

The NSPCC advises that children under the age of 8 are unable to judge speed and distance of moving vehicles reliably, and should not cross roads alone.

At Parklands, we must always act in the best interest of our pupils. We will deny permission for independent travel if we believe a child's safety or behaviour would place them at risk.

3. Collection from School

Children in Nursery, Reception, Years 1–4 must be dropped off and collected in person by a known, authorised adult.

- The adult must be listed on the child's contact file. If someone different is collecting, the school must be notified in advance via phone or email.
- Pupils may only be collected during the school day in exceptional circumstances (e.g. urgent medical appointment). Wherever possible, evidence of the appointment may be requested.
- After-School Clubs: No child, regardless of year group or age, is permitted to walk home alone from an after-school club.

This is a non-negotiable safeguarding measure based on our belief in safety in numbers and concerns around reduced daylight and unpredictable weather conditions in winter.

4. Permission to Walk Home Alone (Year 5 and 6 Only)

Children in Year 5 and Year 6 may be permitted to walk home alone only with the Headteacher's written authorisation.

Request Process:

- Parents must email the school office to request permission.
- The Headteacher will review each request individually.

Decision Criteria:

- Consistent demonstration of the Parklands Three and FRIEND values.
- Maturity and road safety awareness.
- Trustworthiness and direct route adherence.
- Likelihood of responsible behaviour.

Safety Expectations:

- Children must walk home immediately and directly after school.
- They must behave responsibly and uphold school values off-site.

5. Parent Guidance – Is My Child Ready to Walk Home Alone?

Before requesting permission, parents should consider:

- Can my child follow road safety rules independently?
- Will they walk straight home?
- Can they behave responsibly without supervision?
- Would they know what to do if lost or approached by a stranger?

Teach children:

- Safe crossing points and avoiding parked cars/bends.
- Avoiding distractions like phones/headphones.
- To say no and seek help if approached.

If your child is not confident or responsible enough, they should not walk home alone.

6. Late Collection Procedure

If a child is not collected:

- They wait in the school office under supervision.

- School contacts emergency contacts.
- If still not collected by 4:30pm, Children's Social Care Duty Team is contacted.
- Two staff members, including one senior leader, remain with the child.

Repeated incidents may be referred to social care.

7. Safeguarding Concerns at Collection

If a collecting adult is impaired:

- The child will not be released.
- An alternative authorised adult will be contacted.
- If no one suitable is available, Children's Social Care will be contacted.

8. Changing Collection Arrangements

Any changes must be communicated to the school by phone or email.

Requests for pupils to begin or stop walking home must be submitted in writing and approved by the Headteacher.

9. Drop-Off Expectations

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, especially our youngest learners, children must be dropped off at school by a responsible adult.

Children in Nursery, Reception, and Years 1–4 must not be left unattended outside the school gates before they open.

A responsible adult must remain with the child until the gates are opened and school staff are present to receive them.

If a child is found waiting alone, the school will contact parents or carers immediately. Repeated incidents may result in a safeguarding referral.

10. Cycling to and from School

We support healthy and environmentally friendly travel options, including cycling, for older pupils who demonstrate responsibility and road awareness.

Eligibility:

Only pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 may cycle to and from school independently, and only with written permission from the Headteacher.

Requirements:

Pupils must wear a properly fitted helmet at all times.

Bicycles must be roadworthy and equipped with working brakes, reflectors, and lights (if needed).

Pupils are strongly encouraged to complete the Bikeability training course to develop essential road safety skills.

Parents must ensure their child is confident in navigating roads safely and understands the rules of the road.

Safety Expectations:

Pupils must cycle directly to and from school without detours.

They must dismount and walk their bikes once on school premises.

Cycling on school grounds is not permitted during drop-off or pick-up times.

Failure to follow these expectations may result in permission being withdrawn.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years or sooner if safeguarding guidance changes.