

APRIL 2025



WALKING HOME ALONE FROM SCHOOL POLICY

ST EDWARD'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

*“TRUE MIND, TRUE HEART, TRUE SPIRIT;
AS WE GROW IN THE IMAGE OF CHRIST”*

Approved by	
Date	
Last reviewed on	
Next review date	



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Introduction

At St Edward's we pride ourselves on our strong Catholic ethos based on the Gospel values and teaching of the Church. An important part of this is the support we receive from the families who share our values.

This policy reflects and supports the aims of our Mission Statement:

'True Mind, True Heart, True Spirit; as we grow in the image of Christ.'

At St Edward's Academy we believe that every individual is unique and made in God's own image. We accept the trust the parents and carers have placed in putting their children into our care, as a privilege. Therefore, everything we do is aimed at supporting the pupils in our school.

Aim of this policy

The aim of this policy is to create a robust approach to safeguard the pupils in our care both before and after school as far as reasonable and practical. The safety of our pupils is paramount. This policy is in place to ensure that the responsibilities and expectations of all parties are clear when it comes to pupils entering and leaving the school premises.

The beginning and the end of the school day is a very busy time, and our aim is to ensure children are dismissed carefully, under strict supervision, collected on time and arrive home safely. This includes pupils who may arrive at or walk home from school by themselves.

Rationale

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools and FE colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In addition, those bodies must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in considering what arrangements they need to make for the purpose of that section.

This policy should read and applied in conjunction with our [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).



Roles and Responsibilities

- Governors: ensure that this policy is reviewed in a timely manner, either before the review date stated in the policy or before if legislation changes sooner.
- Head teacher/ SLT: ensure that the policy is adhered to by all stakeholders
- Business Manager: ensure that the policy is reviewed as required and that office staff and teaching staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of this policy.
- Office Staff: ensure accurate record keeping, as detailed later in this policy.
- Class teachers: ensure that any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children before or after school are reported promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL
- Parents /Carers: ensure that they communicate effectively with school with regard to contact details and arrangements for the care of their child before and after school as necessary.

Supervision before and after school

There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. It is an offence, however, 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 school journey. The NSPCC advise the following:

- Learning to be independent is an important part of growing up. Between work, appointments and other family commitments; every parent will have to leave their child home alone at some point so it's good to have a plan in place. Every child is different so build up their independence at their pace and check in with them to make sure they feel safe.
- Infants and young children aged 0-3 years old should never be left alone – even for 15 minutes while you pop down the road. This applies not just to leaving them home alone but also in your car while you run into the shops.
- While every child is different, we wouldn't recommend leaving a child under 12 years old home alone, particularly for longer periods of time.
- Children in primary school aged 6-12 are usually too young to walk home from school alone, babysit or cook for themselves without adult supervision. If you need to leave them home, it's worth considering leaving them at a friend's house, with family or finding some suitable childcare
- Keep talking to your child. Whether they're 12 years old or almost 18 years old, there might be reasons that they don't feel safe in the house alone. Just because your child is



Walking Home Alone Policy

older doesn't necessarily mean they are ready to look after themselves or know what to do in an emergency. It can help to go over the ground rules and remind them how to stay safe at home.

- Remember – you should never leave a child home alone if they don't feel ready, or if you don't feel they're ready. Sometimes it's just better to leave them with someone – particularly if they're nervous or have complex needs.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/in-the-home/home-alone/>

Schools are only responsible for safety on the school journey where they have specifically arranged transport.

Walking to and from school independently

If parents/ carers choose to let their child travel to/from school independently, they will be responsible for assessing the risks associated with the school route and their own child's confidence.

Parents/carers of a pupil in Years 4, 5 or 6 can indicate their consent on the Parental Consent form that is sent out at the start of each new academic year. ***If you wish to change your consent, please contact the school office and our Business Manager will resend the form to you.***

Parents are required to work with their children to build up their independence, while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. The most important factor is to consider the suitability of the child walking to/from school alone and if the child is exposed to any risks.

School policy for children to walk home independently is that:

- Children must be in Years 4, 5 or 6 and have given consent via the Parental Consent form.
- It is the parent's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order that they may make an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing of fast roads, walking through secluded areas is to be discouraged. A single route must be agreed.
- Parents must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger. It is parent's responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently happy that their child is capable of undertaking the proposed journey safely.
- During winter months and/or inclement weather, children must be dressed appropriately.
- Children should preferably walk in a group and not alone.



Walking Home Alone Policy

- Children should know their home phone number (plus one other emergency contact) and have their own mobile phone with them.
- There must be someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- Any child must be capable of arriving home within 30 minutes of the end of the school day (3.15pm). Journeys over 30 minutes are not considered appropriate for children to walk at this stage.

The same applies for children at extra-curricular activities, Breakfast Club and Afterschool Club.

Drop off and collection by older siblings

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person if it is not safe for the child to walk home unsupervised. 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 will 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.

The suitability of an older sibling (aged 16 years or above) 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.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the NSPCC recommend that no one under 16 will be left to care for a younger child.

St Edward's Catholic Academy Policy for children to be collected by an older sibling:

- Children in the Early Years (Nursery and Reception) and KS1 (Y1 and Y2) must be collected by an adult aged 16 years and over.
- Children in Y3 to Y6 must not be collected by anyone below the age of 14.

