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Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School

Safe Arrival & Collection Policy

Safeguarding

Version: 2

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Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School
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1. Aims and legislation

There are no laws determining the age or distance a child may walk to and from school alone. 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 will consider what we believe is good practise in ensuring their safety. We also have an obligation to make referrals to the relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

This policy sets out our expectations and procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children, including when we will allow them to travel home (or to another specified location) independently.

2. Expectations by year group

Pupils in:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery & Reception)**
- **KS1 (Years 1 & 2)**
- **Years 3 and 4**

Our agreed school policy is that children in Foundation Stage or Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 should NOT walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.

School staff wait at classroom doors to welcome children (and their parents and carers) into school in the mornings as well as handing over care again at the end of the day. This is an important part of our school and helps to build positive, strong relationships with both children and their families. We expect parents to support us in this by accompanying their children to their classrooms rather than leaving them at perimeter gates or other areas of the school e.g. sibling classrooms.

Pupils in:

- **Years 5 and 6**

Once a child is in Years 5 & 6, we believe they *may* have reached an age and stage of development that would enable them to safely walk to and from school independently. However, we also recognise that all children are different, develop at different rates and have different circumstances.

Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School
Safe Arrival & Collection Policy

Our school policy has been developed to take account of these differences and is therefore, not a one-sized-fits-all approach.

3. Named adults

We will only hand children over to named adults who are already listed on that child's school record. Known older siblings (under 18 years of age) may, in limited circumstances and with prior arrangement with the Headteacher, be permitted to collect children. **We will not allow older brothers or sisters in our school to collect their younger siblings** and would not usually agree to anyone under the age of 16 collecting.

Children will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement and the other adult is able to give the password listed on the child's school record. **It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all details are kept up to date.**

If a person arrives at school expecting to collect a child and the school has not been notified beforehand, that person will be asked to wait until their identity has been verified and contact made with the parent.

4. Uncollected children

Any child who remains uncollected for more than 10mins after the scheduled end of the day for their year group, will be accompanied to the school office so that parents can be contacted. If the child is not collected within 45 minutes and the school has not been successful in making contact with a responsible parent or carer, a referral may be made to local police and/or social care teams.

5. Extra-curricular activities e.g. after school activities or events

Children attending an extra-curricular activity are expected to be collected by a known responsible adult, at the stated time – school staff will follow the same end of school day procedures stated above. Failure to collect children punctually from these activities will lead to places being withdrawn.

During the Summer term, when evenings are lighter, children in Years 5 & 6 who have already been granted permission to walk independently may do so from some after school activities e.g. tutoring sessions. School staff will make this clear on an individual activity basis.

6. Breakfast and After School Club

Children, **in all year groups**, attending Breakfast Club are expected to be accompanied to the appropriate entrance door by a known responsible adult.

Children, **in all year groups**, staying for After School Club are also expected to be collected from the appropriate entrance door by a known responsible adult.

7. Decision making for pupils in Years 5 & 6

Initially, parents are responsible for assessing whether their child lives within a sensible walking distance of school and is ready for the responsibility of safely walking to and from school independently.

7.1 Requests

All children, regardless of year group, are enrolled in our school on the basis that they will be dropped off and collected by a responsible adult every day. Parents are expected to write to the school (e.g. by letter or email addressed to the school office) requesting that their child walk independently.

The school office will then forward this request to the child's teaching team and the school's Safeguarding Team for comment. If the school is satisfied that there are no concerns, the school office will confirm the arrangement in writing and make the necessary changes to the child's school record. However, if any concerns are raised, a member of the school's Leadership or Safeguarding teams will speak directly with the parent to share the nature of the concern and develop an appropriate plan.

7.2 Considerations

When deciding whether a child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and/or from school, parents should assess any risks associated with the route and their child's level of confidence.

Parents should, and school staff will, consider the following:

- Do you trust them to walk straight to school or straight home, using an agreed safe route?
- Are there any roads to cross along the route and how busy/safe are those roads?
- Are they road safety aware?
- Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend or group of friends?
- Would they know what to do if someone approached them?
- Would they know what to do if they needed help?
- Do they understand how to keep themselves safe and the importance of avoiding dangerous choices, either when by themselves or with a group of friends?
- Will there be a responsible person at home to greet them?

7.3 Preparation

Parents should work with their child over a period of time to build up their independence while walking to and from school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

Children who are driven to school do not usually have the same opportunities to develop road awareness and are therefore especially 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

Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School
Safe Arrival & Collection Policy

navigate and develop problem solving skills. This helps them gain the experience and confidence to deal with traffic and finding their way on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Talk to your child about staying safe and share the questions listed above. When they are ready for greater independence, you might choose to follow them a few times on their journey, with their knowledge initially and then from an increasing distance so that you know how safe and sensible they are. It is also strongly advised that children who are walking without an adult, have a cheap mobile phone that they are able to use if they need help.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross at the intersection where there are traffic lights; do not cross in the middle of the road.
- Alternatively, 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.

If you are not confident about how your child would react in any given situation, you should seriously consider whether they are ready to walk on their own.

Please be aware that the office will not be able to take phone calls from parents checking that children have arrived at school safely. The school operates a system of calling parents and carers if no absence notification has been received. However, parents MUST be confident that their child will be able to safely walk independently BEFORE submitting their request to the school.

All mobile phones brought into school need to be handed into the class teacher for safe keeping immediately on arrival, in line with our safeguarding policies.

Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour both before and after school. Should their behaviour be deemed a safeguarding risk you will be asked to accompany them to and from school until they have demonstrated they can be trusted again.

8. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years.