



Helmshore Primary School 2025-26

Policy for collecting children at the end of the day and Safeguarding pupils walking to and from school alone

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. A family's 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.

In setting our protocol for collecting children we have taken advice from the DfE that states:

- ❖ *It is for each school to decide, and enforce its own pupil collection policy and request that parent/carers formalise collection arrangements in writing.*
- ❖ *The school is not responsible for a child's safety on his or her way to school and home.*

NSPCC that states:

- ❖ *Children under eight can't judge the speed and distance of moving vehicles. They still need help when crossing roads.*

All Pupils

Permission and arrangements for children leaving the school at the end of the day will be confirmed in writing by the parent/carers.

All children must be collected from After School Clubs by an adult unless written permission is given for the child to walk home.

No adult other than those named will be allowed to leave the school with a child. In the event that someone else should arrive without prior knowledge, the school will telephone the parent/carers immediately and await their advice.

If a child is to be collected before the end of the school day, the school is to be notified on the same morning before 10.00am. On arrival to school to collect the child the parent/carers will report to the School Office. The child will then be brought, by staff, to the reception to be taken home by the parent/carers

‘Children should only be collected before the end of the school day in exceptional circumstances (for example an urgent medical or dental appointment).’

All routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside school time whenever possible. When it is essential to have a non-routine appointment during the school day, evidence (such as an appointment card or hospital letter) should be shown in advance to the Office Staff. Parents are encouraged to arrange appointments around registration time so that children are given an attendance mark.

If the person who normally picks a child up is not doing so then a note should be sent to school to inform us who is to pick up that day.

Should arrangements change during the day the school should be contacted by telephone.

If the parent/carer or alternative nominated adult is going to be late to collect their child, they should let the school know as soon as possible. We will keep children in school until their arrival. In these circumstances the child is collected from Acorns Club exit door.

Pupils in Foundation Stage, KS1 or lower KS2

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends on their maturity and confidence. Knowing that children under the age of eight can't judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles we expect Year 3 and 4 children to be brought to and collected from school.

All children in Reception, Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 should be picked up from the school site by a known adult or siblings provided they are 14 years old or above (as advised by the NSPCC).

It will be the Head teacher's discretion to allow alternative collection arrangements due to exceptional circumstance.

Pupils in upper KS2 - Walking Home Alone

We advise parents to think about whether your child is ready to walk to and from school and assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence.

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 lots of 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 self-assurance 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 road; 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 and cross while keeping an eye on traffic. Look out for cyclists.
- ❖ Remember that drivers may not see a child, even if the child 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. (A safe adult is someone who has been previously agreed upon by you and your child to be safe, such as a grandparent or trusted neighbour). If that person tries to convince the child to go with him or tries to physically get close, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as they can.

When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you might want to consider the following:

- ❖ Do you trust them to walk straight to school and home?
- ❖ Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend? Are they road safety aware?
- ❖ Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
- ❖ Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
- ❖ Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick or fight)?
- ❖ Would they know what to do if they needed help? Would they know who best to approach to get help?

If you are not confident about how your child would react then you should seriously consider whether you should allow them to walk on their own. If the parents of Year 5 and 6 pupils wish their children to walk home alone or with any younger siblings the school must be informed of this **in writing**. If we have no prior consent then children **must** be picked up from the playground.

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

The following procedures will be followed for any child who is not picked up 3.20pm

The child will remain with the class teacher for up to 5 minutes.

- ❖ After 5 minutes the child should be taken to the hall where they will wait for their parent/carers to pick them up. The administrative team in the School Office will contact the parents by telephone if the child hasn't been picked up by 3.40pm. If other contacts are given on the child's confidential data, they may also be contacted.
- ❖ It is not the school's responsibility to supervise children after school. In some circumstances a charge will be made for providing supervision outside statutory provision (the charge is the same as that for the after-school club).

- ❖ If no contact can be made with the emergency contact or parents, the school will continue to try and make contact for a reasonable amount of time until 4.30pm, at the latest.
- ❖ After 4.30pm, if we have not been able to make contact then Social Services will be contacted for advice. Two members of school staff (which should include at least one Senior Member of Staff) will remain at school until Social Services make their decision as to whether it is a case of abandonment.
- ❖ The school will ensure that these protocols have been followed by staff and a note of all calls will be completed.
- ❖ If a child is frequently not collected on time, then the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be contacted.
- ❖ NO CHILD WILL EVER BE LEFT ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES UNATTENDED.

The following procedure will be followed if any child is picked up by an allegedly impaired person.

If the person picking up a child is, in the judgment of staff, impaired (under the influence of drugs or alcohol) and unable to adequately care for the child, the staff will not release the child to that person. The child will be taken to the School Office and a member of the Senior Leadership Team will offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the person and child.

If no contact can be made, then Social Services will be contacted for advice.

If at any time you need to change the arrangements you have made, please ensure you let school know in writing or by phone.