



**WHITMORE**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

# Collection & Walking Alone Policy 2024/25

|                                                       |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| This policy will be reviewed:                         | Bi-Annually  |
| This policy was ratified by the Local Governing Body: | October 2024 |

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## **Intimate Care Policy 2023**

### **1 Introduction**

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

### **2 Aim**

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 the children is paramount.

This policy is in place to ensure that the responsibilities and expectations of all parties are clear when it comes to children 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. In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we aim to resolve the situation as quickly as possible to cause as little distress as possible to the child. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be aware of procedures being followed.

### **3 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.

Safeguarding arrangements will include consideration of the procedures for dealing with children who are late to be collected or are not collected at the end of a school day/authorised school activity and where the Governing Body or Proprietor retains responsibility for the use of school premises. It also applies where staff have concerns about effective care by the person collecting the child and the impact of this on the

child's safety outside of school, in line with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES 2012 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF 2018.

Other legislation relevant to this guidance:

- Children Act 2004
- Children and Young Persons Act 1933
- Occupiers liability Acts 1957 and 1984

This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with Whitmore Primary School and Nursery's Child Protection policy.

#### **4 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 of School:** 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.
- **Senior Leaders:** ensure that the policy is adhered to by all stakeholders.
- **Office Staff:** ensure accurate record keeping by updating and maintaining the shared Teams document for children who have permission to walk home alone. All copies of signed documents should be uploaded electronically to CPOMS.
- **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.

#### **5 Procedure**

##### 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.

If parents/carers of a child in Year 5 or below would like their child to access school independently they will be required to meet with the school or have a telephone discussion with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to discuss their individual needs and gain school authorisation.

Parents/carers of a pupil in Year 6 can submit written consent to allow their child to access school independently. See Appendix 1.

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.

The school policy for children to walk home independently is that:

- Children must be in year 6 and have written consent. Any child below year 5 must have authorisation from school and written consent from a parent with parental responsibility.
- It is the parent's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order that they may assess the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing of fast roads and 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 parents' 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.
- Children should know their home phone number (plus one other emergency contact) and either have their own mobile phone or money for a phone box.
- There must be someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- Any child must be capable of arriving home within 20 minutes of the end of the school day (3.20pm). Journeys over 20 minutes are not considered appropriate for children to walk at this stage.

#### 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, 2024). 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

Whitmore Primary School policy for children to be collected by an older sibling:

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

Written permission from parents/carers will be required for older siblings to collect or drop off younger children and this will be recorded – see Appendix 2. If we have any concern that older siblings are not competent to take younger siblings to and from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements; this will be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of collection) and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services if necessary.

#### Parent/carer's ability to offer safe care

If the school has a concern that the parent/carer is using drugs/alcohol and therefore may not be able to provide safe care for their child, the school will speak with the parent/carer to inform them of the concerns. A Designated Safeguarding lead will be notified, and they will speak with the parent/carer to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child. However, if the extent of a parent's own needs mean that they cannot keep the child safe from harm, then a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made.

If an adult who does not have parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care, collection will be refused. A parent with parental responsibility will be contacted and required to collect their child from school.

The school will aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of Police and Children's Services, but schools do not have the authority legally to retain a child against a parent/carer's will. If a parent/carer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol and takes the child/children off site, the school will request a Police welfare check.

#### Extra-curricular activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection will be applied to extended school activities. Safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL, who will decide on the appropriate response.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues. The school governing body will ensure that as part of the Premises of Hire agreement, the organisation has confirmed that:

- Level one safeguarding children training has been completed by staff
- A child protection policy is in place
- An appropriately trained designated member of staff is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns.

### Late Collection

We do not expect any child to be collected late. All children are expected to be collected at 3:10pm (EYFS/KS1) or 3.20pm (KS2). If a parent/carer is delayed for any reason it is the parent/carer's responsibility to call an authorised adult to collect the child from school on their behalf. The school office will not make these calls.

Children who are not collected by 3:35pm will be placed in after-school care and an emergency care charge will applied. Parents will be required to collect their child from the After School Club.

Whitmore Primary School will:

- Check for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- Attempt to contact the parents/carers at home/work/mobile phone.
- Attempt to telephone emergency contacts
- Keep a record of incidents where parents/carers are late
- Send a letter home to the parent/carer notifying them of the possible arrangements that may be put into place for their child if they continue to collect their child late and invite parents in for a discussion about their circumstances if applicable. See Appendix 3

In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent/carer must give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home. The parent/carer will be required to pass on their child's password and supply a description of the adult collecting the child. This must be recorded, and it is good practice to write to the parent/carer to confirm that this arrangement was made at their request and with their consent. See Appendix 4

Concerns about a child's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with Whitmore Primary School's Child protection Policy and local practice guidance.

### Non-collection

Parents will be informed that in the event that their child is not collected from school by an authorised adult and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty-five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time. The school will follow our child protection procedures, i.e. Police will be informed and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services will be made. The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken, and calls made. Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them.

A letter will be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put into place for their child (Appendix 3) and to invite them in for a discussion about their individual circumstances. Once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain whether there is anything that we could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation. It may be necessary to discuss with the parent steps that they could take to avoid recurrence e.g. ensuring that we have current contact details etc. It will also be necessary to review the procedures used to ensure that they worked smoothly and if necessary to amend for future incidents.

### Special arrangements

If parents/carers are unable to drop off and collect their child in accordance with this policy, they are required to attend a face to face meeting with the Safeguarding and Pastoral lead. The purpose of the meeting will be to explore their individual needs and alternative arrangements. The school will review each case on an individual basis and ensure any alternative drop off and collection arrangements are assessed in line with the suitability for the child and their safety. All meetings and plans will be recorded on Whitmore Primary School's electronic system, CPOMS. Any child with an authorised individual drop-off and collection plan will be identified to all staff.



## Appendix 1 - Walking to and from school



I wish to notify Whitmore Primary school that my child will be walking to/from school by themselves on a regular basis.

I confirm that my child is suitable to walk home, knows how to keep him/herself safe and is able to deal with emergencies that could arise.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the Collection and Walking Home Policy.

I can confirm I have parental responsibility. I understand that this is my own decision and that the school is not responsible for my child once they have been released from their classroom.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 - Drop off and collection by older siblings



**WHITMORE**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

I wish to inform Whitmore Primary School that my child will be collected from school by their older sibling at the end of the school day.

I can confirm that their older sibling is at least 16 years of age if collecting a child in reception to Year 2 OR 14 years of age to collect a child in Year 3 to Year 6. I, as the parent, accept full responsibility for their welfare walking home from school.

I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the Collection and Walking Home Policy.

I can confirm I have parental responsibility. I understand that this is my own decision and that the school is not responsible for my child once they have been released from their classroom.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling's Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 – Late collection from school



Dear [parent/carer],

As you are aware, [child] was collected late from school on [date]. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child/ren are collected on time; being collected late is very distressing for the child/ren concerned.

I would like to remind you that, in order to keep your child/ren safe, Whitmore Primary School and Nursery is obliged to implement a Late Collection Procedure. If your child is collected late again, you will be charged £6.00 per child and you will be required to make the payment via School Gateway.

If you are regularly late to collect your child, fail to collect your child after 45 minutes, or fail to make suitable alternative collection arrangements this may lead to the school contacting Police and Children's Services.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school, are late collecting a child from school or where there are repeated incidents of last-minute collection arrangements.

This letter is intended to make you aware of the problem so you can begin to address it. I look forward to an improvement in the situation.

Please speak to Miss Gladwin (Family Support Officer) or your child's teacher if you are currently experiencing difficulties in collecting your child, or if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

[Headteacher]  
**Head of School**

## Appendix 4 – Non collection



Dear [parent/carer],

As you are aware, name of child was not collected from school on day/date and we were unable to contact you, or the emergency contact, via the details you provided to the school.

I would like to remind you that, in the event of non-collection of a pupil, Whitmore Primary School and Nursery must work in accordance with child protection procedures. For this reason, children's services and the police were made aware of the situation.

In order to keep your child safe, Whitmore Primary School and Nursery is obliged to implement our Late Collection Procedure. You have therefore been charged £6.00 for the supervision of your child and you will be required to make the payment via School Gateway.

I hope the reason for the late collection of your child was not serious. Can I ask that if you are experiencing difficulties collecting your child on time, or arranging transportation for them, to speak to Miss Gladwin, or your child's class teacher. We can then discuss ways in which we may be able to support you and your child.

Yours sincerely

[Headteacher]  
**Head of School**