



13.3

### **Safeguarding Children Walking to and from the Charity Alone Policy**

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to or from school or a childcare setting. 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 the charity safely, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel. However, as a charity we are responsible for the welfare of our children and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our children. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

#### **Children in Foundation Stage or KS1**

Our agreed charity policy is that no child in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from our charity on their own or be left on their own on the charity premises either before or after sessions.

In addition, we will only hand over children to named permitted adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at the charity deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

Children will not be handed over to other adults unless the charity has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement, and either their details are provided on the registration form or the child's password is given and ID shown. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter. If someone turns up to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified their identity. If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in the charity and parents will be contacted. If the child is not collected and we have failed to contact the child's carer or their emergency contact after 30 minutes we will consult with children social care services.

If we are able, we will leave voice messages for parents and/or emergency contact explaining what steps we have taken. Parents are requested to contact us immediately if they become aware that they may be late collecting their child.



### **Children in KS2 and KS3 (Years 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)**

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk to the charity or home on their own, we believe that children in year 3 and 4 should be still brought to and collected from the charity and this is our charity policy. Therefore, as regards to children in Year 5, 6 and 7 we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from the charity alone.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to or from the charity 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 and from the charity through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are many ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are driven to the charity do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they start to walk to or from the charity independently.

Walking to the charity 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 confidence 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 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. Speak to your child about what they should do if this should ever happen.



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

1. Do you trust them to walk straight home?
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?
3. Are they road safety aware?
4. Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?
5. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?
6. Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they did not want to do?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know whom 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 you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, then you must inform the charity by completing the slip below.

Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing. Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the charity premises either before or after sessions. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to accompany them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending our after school club it may be dark when the club finishes. Where children walk to, or walk home from the charity alone, we would usually expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive. If the child will be leaving from, or returning to, an empty house, we would expect that this is only for a short period of time and that the child knows how, and can, access emergency adult support if needed.

**IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE, PLEASE ENSURE YOU LET US KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the CEO and head of children & family services. Any changes will be communicated to all staff, parents, carers and children.



## **Permission for children to walk to and from the charity unaccompanied.**

To be completed by a person with parental responsibility for the child and returned to the St Chad's Community Project childcare service.

| <b>Permission for children to walk to and from the charity unaccompanied</b>   |       |
|--|-------|
| Name of child:   |       |
| Key stage:   |       |
| <p>I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from the charity before and/ or after sessions alone. I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change. I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the 'Safeguarding children walking to and from the charity alone policy'.</p> <p>I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to/ from the charity alone, the charity is not responsible for my child's actions or whereabouts once they are not on the charity premises.</p> |       |
| Full Name of Parent/ Carer:  |       |
| Signed (Parent/ Carer):  | Date: |