

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY

Author / reviewer responsible:	NM	Last amended:	May 2026
Authorisation by resolution of:	Governors	Date of authorisation:	-
		Date of next review:	September 2027

Background

There is no law around age or distance of walking to school. 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, at St Joseph's, 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 in the town of Malmesbury.

Pupils in Foundation Stage, KS1 (Years 1 & 2) and Years 3 4 and 5

St Joseph's School policy is that pupils in Foundation Stage or Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 do NOT walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. Our reasoning for this is that there are several roads to cross without the aid of pedestrian crossings.

In addition to the above, staff will also only hand over pupils to named adults or persons.

Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent/guardian that they have made this arrangement. The school also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter or email to admin@st-josephs-malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk

If someone arrives to collect your child and we have not been notified, the collecting adult will have to wait until staff have verified their identity. If for some reason, you are late collecting your child and we have not been notified in advance, the school will arrange for them to go to the afterschool club. As this provision is outside the school day, the after school club will charge for their services.

Pupils in Years 6

For pupils in Year 6 and who

- Live within safe walking distance of the school. - Are able to walk a safe route.

We believe that you as parents and guardians, should have the choice of deciding whether your child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from school alone. We believe 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 confidence to deal with traffic and way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school, you should assess:

- Any risks associated with the route
- Your child's confidence, using the attached checklist.
- How you can realistically build their independence to walk to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

For parents and guardians wishing their Year 6 child to walk home independently, we ask that:

- Parents / guardians have registered with the school that they are prepared for their child to walk directly home from school at the end of the day.
- Parent's / guardian's have checked the route their child will be using and made an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. For example, ***Crossing of the Malmesbury bypass (A429) is not appropriate.***
- A single route is agreed so that if there are any issue on the journey we are able to easily locate the child..
- Parents are certain that the child has an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger.
It is the 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 are dressed appropriately.
- There is someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- The chosen route will allow the child to arrive home within 30 minutes of the end of the school day (15.20hrs). Journeys over 30 minutes are not considered appropriate.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, please complete the attached form and submit to admin@st-josephs-malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk

How to complete the form

- (1) Circle yes or no for each statement (please note that if you circle 'no' for any of the statements, your child may not be ready to walk to or from school.
- (2) Read the information and if you agree please sign and date if you want your child to walk to school alone.
- (3) Read the information and if you agree, please sign and date if you want your child to walk home alone.

(4) Please submit the form via email admin@st-josephs-malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk, or hand the form into the office – for safeguarding purposes, the form needs to be submitted prior to any independent travel.

(5) If at any time you need to change the arrangements, please ensure you let us know in writing.

As part of keeping your child safe and the school being able to support our families in the case of an emergency we do request that parents provide us with a copy of the walking route.

You will receive email confirmation from school that we have received your permission form for your child to either walk to school alone, walk alone from school to home or both.

Unsupervised Walk TO / FROM school: Parent Agreement

Child's Name _____

Class _____

	Question	Answer
1	The route to school is within safe walking distance .	Yes / No
2	My child can arrive at school or home within 30mins of starting their journey .	Yes / No
3	When walking home – my child will go straight home	Yes / No
4	When walking home, a responsible person will be at home to supervise them	Yes / No
5	The route avoids fast roads or dangerous crossing points, for example the Malmesbury bypass (A429).	Yes / No
6	My child has pavement along the whole of their school route	Yes / No
7	I consider the route to school to be a safe route for my child.	Yes / No
8	My child is aware of the potential dangers regarding roads/ traffic and how to avoid dangers and stay safe.	Yes / No
9	My child understands and follows the green cross code.	Yes / No
10	My child understands stranger danger.	Yes / No
11	My child knows what to do if they need help	Yes / No
12	My child knows what to do in an emergency	Yes / No
13	I acknowledge that there will be other risks	Yes / No

Please tick relevant boxes

☐ I have read and understood this policy on safeguarding my child walking to and from school alone.

☐ I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my child gets to and from school safely including getting to school on time. - If circumstances change then I will communicate this with school.

☐ I have provided a map of the route to/from school.

Signed _____

Date _____