



CHILD TRAVELLING TO OR FROM SCHOOL UNSUPERVISED.

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. We advise that they only go to and from school without an adult if they live close to school and do not have to travel by public transport.

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. 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 confidence to deal with traffic and finding their own way 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. (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). And if that person tries to convince him to go with him or tries to physically get close to him, 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:

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 didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick, and fight)?

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.

9. Are they wearing reflective bright clothing?

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform the school complete the appropriate form.

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 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.

If you decide you want your child to travel unsupervised to and / or from school you are accepting full responsibility for any consequences.

We also recommend you have procedures in place to ensure that children are not home alone. Although there is no law to state children of a certain age must not be left home alone, it does say however that they must not be home alone if they are at risk. This is against the law and could result in a parent being prosecuted on the grounds of neglect.

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