



Barnsole Primary School

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE POLICY



Date of Last Review:	September 2025
Date of Next Review:	September 2026

Introduction

There is no specific law in England regarding the age or distance a child may walk to school alone. Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, but the decision on whether a child may travel independently rests with them. Schools, however, retain a duty of care for pupils and must put in place procedures that promote safety, in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2025).

Walking independently to school can be an important step in a child's development. It requires judgement from both parents/carers and the school to balance independence with safeguarding responsibilities. This privilege may be withdrawn if it is considered unsafe.

Pupils in EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Years 3–4

Children in Nursery, Reception, Years 1–4 must be accompanied to and from school by a responsible adult. They should not be left alone on school premises before or after school. Pupils will only be released to adults identified by parents/carers in advance. If collection arrangements change, the school must be notified in writing (letter or email). If no authorised adult arrives, the child will remain at school until collected. Siblings who are themselves pupils at the school may not collect younger children.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6

There is no fixed age when children are ready to walk to school alone; readiness depends on maturity, confidence, and ability to follow safety rules. The school permits Year 5 and 6 pupils to travel alone, provided written permission is given by a parent/carer. This permission can be withdrawn if the school has concerns.

Parents/carers should consider:

- Whether the child will go directly home.
- Their ability to behave responsibly alone or with friends.
- Their road safety awareness and response to traffic.
- How they would respond if approached by a stranger.
- Whether they know who to approach if they need help.

Children should be supported to gradually build independence by walking with parents/carers, learning safe routes, and practising road safety skills. Resources such as Think! Road Safety (DfT) and NSPCC advice on personal safety can be used to prepare children.

Practical Safety Guidance

Children should be reminded to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times.
- Cross at safe places such as pedestrian crossings.
- Avoid crossing between parked cars or on bends.
- Look and listen carefully before crossing.
- Be alert to cyclists and drivers.
- Never go with anyone other than a 'safe adult' agreed with parents.

Behaviour and Responsibility

Children permitted to travel independently are expected to behave appropriately on the school site before and after school. If behaviour causes concern, parents may be asked to resume accompanying their child until trust is re-established.

Communication with School

Parents/carers must notify the school in writing of any changes to travel or collection arrangements immediately. The school will always act in the best interests of the child's safety.