

Tithe Farm Primary School



Drop off, Collection and Walking Home Policy

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.

Statement of intent

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 Act 1989
- Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Occupiers liability Acts 1957 and 1984

This policy should read and applied in conjunction with the school's child protection policy.

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 teacher/ SLT:** ensure that the policy is adhered to by all staff.
- **Office Staff:** ensure accurate record keeping, as detailed later in this policy.
- **Class teachers:** ensure that any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children before or after school are reported promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL
- **Class teachers** ensure that all children walking home have the correct consent on file and that any messages regarding the child's journey home have been shared with the appropriate parties.
- **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.

There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. It is an offence, however, to leave a child alone if it places them at risk and therefore schools have a continual obligation to alert relevant authorities if they believe this is the case.

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

Parents/carers of a pupil in Year 5 can submit written consent to allow their child to access school independently. A Google Form will be sent to parents to complete.

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.

School policy for children to walk home independently is that:

- Children must be in year 5 and above and have written consent.
- It is the parent's responsibility to check the route that their children may walk home in order that they may make an assessment of the appropriateness of the journey. Crossing of fast roads, walking through secluded areas should be discouraged. It is advised a single route is agreed.
- Parents must be certain that children have an awareness and understanding of the green cross code and stranger danger. It is 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 must be dressed appropriately.
- Children should preferably walk in a group and not alone.
- Children should either have their own mobile phone or know an emergency contact phone number.
- It is advised that there should be someone at home to meet the child on their arrival.
- Journeys over 30 minutes are not considered appropriate for children to walk at this stage.

- The same applies for children being collected from extra-curricular activities. We ask that extra consideration is given to children walking home after extra-curricular activities, especially in the winter months when it is dark. Wherever possible we advise that in these circumstances children are collected from school.

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, 1933). 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

Tithe Farm Primary School's Policy for children to be collected by an older sibling:

- Children must be collected by an adult aged 16 years and over. Unless agreed on a case by case basis.

Parent/carers 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/children, 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 via the Integrated Front Door.

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 offsite the school will ring for a Police welfare check.

Late Collection.

We do not expect any child to be collected late. All children are expected to be collected at 3.30pm.

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/children from school on their behalf. Please do not be offended if you are required to give a chosen password or identification.

Children not collected by 3:30pm will be placed in our Big Fun Club and an emergency care charge will be applied.

Parent/ carers will be required to collect their child from the main office.

Tithe Farm 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 contact.
- Keep a record of incidents on CPOMS 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.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by somebody who does not have parental responsibility (including siblings, if appropriate and in line with school policy), whether this is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent/carer contact the office to give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home.

The parent/carer will be required to share a password with the adult, when collecting the child. It is good practice to shared details of regular people likely to collected recorded on CPOMS.

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 their 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 and under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them.

If Late or a Non collection is an area of concern a letter will be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put into place for their child 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 a member of the senior leadership team or DSL.

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.