



Date Adopted: Summer 2025  
Date to be reviewed: Summer 2027

# Quadring Cowley and Brown's Primary School

## Children Travelling to and from School Alone Policy

*At Quadring Cowley & Brown's Primary School we strive 'to nurture and inspire all children to be well-rounded, confident and resilient individuals who love learning and are ready for life beyond school.'*

*Article 3 - The best interests of the child must be top priority in all actions regarding children.*

*Article 19 - Children should be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment by their parents or anyone who looks after them.*

*Article 36 - Children must be protected from things that could harm them.*

### **Overview of the Policy**

There is no set legal age that children can travel to and from school independently or be left on their own.

Definition of 'travel' for the purpose of this policy relates to walking, cycling, scootering or any other form of travel whereby a child is travelling to and from school alone, unaccompanied by an authorised adult.

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."*

**However, it is an offence 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. This could, theoretically, include the journey to and from school.**

Further guidance contained in a small booklet produced by the NSPCC states that children under 8 cannot judge speed and distance of moving vehicles. The booklet is very informative and amongst other things has a section for parents on 'Keeping your Child Safe'. For further information please visit the NSPCC website at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel.** However, it is the duty of any parent/carer to ensure that they are making decisions that will keep their child/children safe and free from any form of possible harm.

The DFE indicate that it is for each school to decide on their own home to school policy. The school is not responsible for the safety of a pupil once the school day is over and the pupil has left the school premises.

**As a school we have a duty of care for the safety and well-being of our children and therefore this policy is to help advise parents/carers in the decisions they make for their children in relation to safety to and from school.**

The policy not only reflects the values of the school, but more importantly addresses the safeguarding of our pupils.

### **Pupils in Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) and/or KS1 (Year 1 - Year 2)**

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 will be permitted to travel to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.

In all circumstances a responsible person, usually a parent or carer, or somebody authorised by a parent or carer and known by the school should collect the child at the end of the school day.

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We will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings - provided they themselves are deemed mature enough by school to undertake this responsibility and also provided we have the relevant written parental/guardian permission if this is not the parent/carer.

Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement and all relevant policy and procedures have been followed e.g passwords given, ID seen.

If no named adult or sufficiently mature sibling turns up to collect, the child will be kept in school and parents contacted.

There is no set age when children are ready to travel to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore, with regards to pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, we believe that you as parents need to discuss with school and then decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.

### **Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4**

It is our agreed school policy that no children in Year 3 and Year 4 should travel to and from school on their own without a responsible adult, and are still brought to and collected from school. No pupil in Year 3 or Year 4 should be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.

The only exception to these circumstance for a pupil in Year 4 is if they are travelling with an older sibling in Year 6. This will be only be allowed if both pupils are deemed by both school and parents to be mature enough and road safety aware enough to keep themselves safe at all times. This authorisation/permission will only be given by the Headteacher if parental/guardian written consent is provided and after all factors have been reviewed and agreed with the parents/guardians. In these circumstances, if any Year 4 child is left to travel to and from school on their own by the older sibling or parents/carers at any point, this permission will be withdrawn. This permission will only be given in the Summer term that the child is in Year 4 as the nights will be lighter and the weather fairer and therefore some of the safety risks will be reduced.

If any child in Year 4, Year 5 or Year 6 is deemed to be unsafe or whose behaviour compromises the reputation of the school whilst walking to and from school, permission will be immediately withdrawn for this child to travel to and from school alone.

### **Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6**

It is our agreed school policy that children in Year 5 and Year 6 are permitted to travel to and from school on their own without a responsible adult, if deemed to be mature and safe enough to do this. Permission will only be granted after written parental consent has been received by the school.

It is a recommendation by our school that children should only be travelling to and from school in the latter part of the Spring Term and also the Summer Term as the weather is fairer and it is lighter after school finishes. This is for safeguarding reasons.

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If any child in Year 5 or Year 6 is deemed to be unsafe or whose behaviour compromises the reputation of the school whilst travelling to and from school, permission will be immediately withdrawn for this child to travel to and from school alone.

Any withdrawal or permission will be dealt with on an individual basis and be reviewed in a timely manner, as decided by the Headteacher.

### **Drop off and collection by older siblings**

If it is not safe for a child to travel home alone unaccompanied, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person.

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 should 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.

If parents have given permission for older siblings to collect /drop off younger children this should be recorded. If the school has any concern that older siblings are not competent to take younger siblings to and from school or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements; this must be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of collection) and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services where necessary.

The school has therefore set out in its policy that the minimum age at which an older sibling can collect or drop off a younger sibling is 14 years of age. The school have the right to refuse any person under this age permission to collect a pupil from the school's premises.

The suitability of a sibling 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.

### **Extra-curricular activities including after-school clubs**

It is the school's agreed policy that no child will be given permission to travel home from school following an after-school or extra-curricular activity that finishes later than the end of the normal school day at 3.15pm. All children must be collected by parents/carers at the allocated time from the school.

### **Collection of pupils during the school day for medical appointments or illness**

Any child leaving during the school day will always need to be collected by a parent/carer or named adult as agreed on the annual permission forms. This refers to times when children need to be collected due to illness, for an approved medical appointment or for any other approved

absence by the Headteacher. No child will be allowed to travel home alone in any of these circumstances.

### **Use of Mobile Phones for Pupils**

We understand that you may wish for your child to carry a mobile phone if travelling home unaccompanied, and this will be permitted only for children who have been given permission to travel to and from school alone. For safeguarding reasons, mobile phones must be switched off and handed to the school office each morning upon entry to school to be stored securely. All property must be clearly named. Your child can then collect their mobile phone at the end of the school day and must only switch their phones on after leaving the school premises.

### **Deciding if your child is ready**

As a parent/carer, you may ask yourself, "At what age should I let my child travel home alone?"

The answer unfortunately isn't that straight forward. A child doesn't magically at some predetermined age become confident, assertive, capable and powerful. Ideally, and in reality the development of these attributes is a gradual process of ever-greater challenges during which a child gains experience and autonomy.

In deciding whether your child is ready to travel to school you should consult with your child's class teacher, assess any risks associated with the route and consider your child's confidence and readiness. Please see Appendix 1 for some prompts and questions to consider when doing so (Note: these prompts are by no means exhaustive.)

If you are not confident with any of the questions in Appendix 1 or have any other concerns then you should seriously consider whether you should allow your child to travel on their own and, if in doubt, contact the school for advice.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform the school by letter, ensuring you state in the letter that: You have read the schools Children Travelling to or from School Alone Policy; you give permission for your child to travel to/from school on their own; that you have considered and put in place arrangements should there be any issues for your child when travelling home or in accessing home and that you understand that as soon as your child leaves the school premises, your child is no longer under the responsibility of the school and it is your sole responsibility to ensure that your child is safe.

It is important to note that, if a child is granted permission to travel to/from school alone, the child will 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 from school them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

**IF, FOLLOWING PERMISSION BEING GIVEN TO A CHILD TO TRAVEL TO/FROM SCHOOL ALONE, ARRANGEMENTS CHANGE, YOU MUST LET THE SCHOOL KNOW IN WRITING IMMEDIATELY.**

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Parental/carer Permission must be given in writing by completing the form in Appendix 2. This form also includes a safety risk assessment checklist that parents/carers must complete and return with the parental/carer permission form.

Copies of this can be collected from the main school office.

## Appendix 1

### Considerations for deciding if a child is mature enough to travel to/from school alone

In the first instance, consider: Has your child had ample opportunities to travel to school with you to build up their independence and confidence whilst walking to school, including: Route finding, road safety skills and general awareness?

It is also vital to consider: is your child able to keep confidently keep themselves safe when on their own. Including, but not limited to, whether or not your child can:

- 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; be aware of quiet vehicles (e.g. hybrid or electric cars); and cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Follow the high way code for cycling and this includes wearing of the appropriate safety clothing/equipment e.g cycle helmet, high visibility jacket or equivalent
- 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.
- Know the risks strangers pose to them and that they should never go with or follow someone who 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).
- Know how to contact emergency services or gain urgent help if needed when on their own
- Know how to respond if someone who isn't a safe adult tries to convince or force them to go with them, including: Screaming for help, harming/hurting/impairing the assailant, running away, seeking urgent help from nearby adults or the emergency services.

Further questions to consider, when deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility are:

1. Do you trust them to travel 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, fight, seek help, contact emergency services etc.)?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

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### Appendix 2:

#### Parental/Carer/Guardian Permission Form for pupils to travel to and from school alone

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school ASAP.

Name of child:

Year:

Class:

- I wish to inform you that my child will be travelling to/from school on a regular basis. I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my child gets to and from school safely including getting to school on time. I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.
- I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in 'policy on safeguarding pupils travelling to and from school alone'.
- I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to travel to and from school alone, the school is not responsible for my child's actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.
- I understand that if my child has a mobile phone for safety reasons when travelling to and from school that my child must hand in their mobile phone to the main school office upon arrival at school and can only collect this at the end of the school day.
- I fully understand that if they are at an extra- curricular activity/After School Provision they should always be collected by a named adult.
- I have assessed the risks and I am confident that my child has the knowledge and understanding to keep themselves safe when travelling to and from school. I have completed the attached checklist and returned this with my permission form.
- I understand that if my child needs to go home from school due to illness, or is attending an approved medical appointment or any other Headteacher approved reason for absence, that they will not be allowed to travel home alone and must be collected by parent/carers or any other named responsible adult from the school.
- I have indicated, in the any additional information section below, the days that my child will be travelling to and from school alone or with a sibling (Year 4 and above) to the best of my ability. I will keep the school updated with any changes to the days that my child will be travelling to and from school alone.

Any additional information:

Parental/carers signature:

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian/Carer:

Relationship to child:

Date:

Emergency Telephone Number:

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### Permission to travel to and/or from school alone Parent/Carer Risk Assessment Checklist

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Year group \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the most appropriate answer to each statement.

- The route to school is *within safe travelling distance* yes/ no
- I consider the route to school to be a *safe route* yes/ no
- My child does not need to cross any busy/main roads yes/ no
- My child does need to cross a busy/main road(s) and I have taught them to cross safely at a crossing labelled on the map of the route yes/no
- My child is aware of the potential dangers regarding roads/ traffic and how to avoid dangers and stay safe yes/ no
- My child understands and follows the green cross code yes/ no
- My child understands stranger danger yes/ no
- My child knows what to do if they need help yes/ no
- My child knows what to do in an emergency yes/ no
- My child will have a mobile phone yes/ no
- They will have my number, the school number and an emergency contact on their phone yes/ no
- I acknowledge that there will be other risks yes/ no
- When travelling home - my child will go straight home yes/ no
- When travelling home my child will not take a detour yes/ no
- When travelling home, a responsible person will be at home to supervise them yes/ no
- If my child is travelling to another destination other than home, the school will be informed immediately yes/no
- My child will be travelling to my place of work or other destination yes/no
- I have informed the school of my child travelling home to a destination that is not home yes/no