



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Chiswick

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **Walking Home Alone and Collection of Siblings**

The safety of our community is of utmost importance to us and, as a result, we have decided to tighten our processes and expectations around the safety of our school premises.

There has been some confusion about the arrangements for children going home alone at the end of the school day. As a school, 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. We have a duty of care to the pupils when they are on site and want to ensure that they will be safe once they leave our care at the end of the day. We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school. 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."

The NSPCC says:

"...children under 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time."

We are therefore putting systems in place to ensure that no child is left in the care of young children for the safety and security of everyone.

### **EYFS, KS1 and Year 3 - 5**

No child from EYFS or Years 1-5, will be allowed to go home alone. We will only dismiss children of these ages to named adults, or siblings aged 14 years or older. If parents wish for older siblings (above the age of 14) to collect their younger siblings, parents and carers must communicate this with the school in writing. We do reserve the right to use our professional judgement to refuse to dismiss children to older siblings if we, as a school, do not feel it is appropriate. We will not allow older siblings within the school to collect younger siblings.

### **Year 6**

We encourage all parents and carers to collect their children from school. However, as there is no set age at which the law allows for children to go home alone, we recognise that parents of children in Year 6 may want to support their children in developing independence. This being the case, we will allow children in Year 6 to walk home alone with the prior, written consent of a parent or carer, provided that the school and the parent have no concerns about the child's ability to keep themselves safe. They will not be allowed to take home younger siblings as they are below the age of 14.

When deciding whether your child is ready for the responsibility of going to and/or from home you might want to consider the following:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight to school or straight home, using the agreed safe route?
2. Are there roads to cross on the route and how busy/safe are those roads?
3. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend or group of friends?
4. Are they road safety aware?
5. Would they know what to do if a stranger approached them?
6. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
7. Do they understand about keeping themselves safe and not to make any dangerous choices, either by themselves or with a group of friends?
8. Have you had reason to question their judgement for their age?

If you are happy for your child in Year 6 to walk home alone, please complete the slip below. Should their behaviour not be acceptable, you will be asked to accompany them or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

#### **After School Clubs and Activities – Year 6**

If your child stays at school for a club and it is dark once the club finishes (from after the Autumn half term break up to the Spring half term break), you must make arrangements for your child to be collected. No child will be allowed to walk home alone after an after-school club or activity when it is dark.

#### **Changes to collection arrangements**

If there are any changes to the collection arrangements for your child, please ensure that you let the school know immediately, and in writing. In addition to this, we ask that all parents email the school to set up a change of collection instruction password for their child (for example 'Rainbow'). This password will be stored on file and required in any communication to the school, in order to change any collection arrangements.

We appreciate your support in safeguarding our children. It is important that we all play our part in being vigilant.

### PERMISSION TO WALK HOME ALONE

I give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to walk home alone at the end of the school day.

I give permission for my child to walk home alone following after school club at 4:30pm, only when it is light outside. Yes / No

I have explained to my child the safety aspects of going home on their own.

I understand that my child is the responsibility of parents and carers, once they have left the school premises.

Signed Parent/ Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_