The Park Federation Academy Trust
James Elliman Academy

Safe Handover/Children Walking Home Alone Policy 2026-2027

To be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

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Approval History

Approved by	Tajinder Johal
Date of approval	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027

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Version History

Version	Date	Status and Purpose	Changes overview
1	01/09/2021	Final	Policy created
2	22/08/2023	Update	No content change. Re phrased so that information is clearer.
3	23/07/2024	Review	No change
4	22/10/2024	Update	Addition of the protocol and procedures in place when a child goes missing during handover times or when walking home alone.
5	31/07/2025	Update	
6	19/08/2026	Update	Added to linked policy list. Consolidated advice for parents and carers.

SAFEGUARDING PUPILS DURING DROP OFF AND COLLECTION AND ADVICE ON WALKING HOME ALONE

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

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel. **However, 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 also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk**. (See our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on the school website)

CHILDREN WHO ATTEND EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) AND KEY STAGE 1 (KS1)

- Our policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from school on their own, or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.
- At collection, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings, provided that they are 18 years old or above.
- Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent or carer that they have made this arrangement. The school must have the name of the adult for collection to commence.
- Parents and carers must inform us of any drop off and collection arrangements at the start of a new academic year, as circumstances may have changed and the child's new teacher will need to be informed of the correct information. We also ask that parents and carers keep us informed of any changes in arrangements throughout the year, preferably by letter or email, to the school office.
- If someone else arrives to collect a child, and we have not been notified, the adult will be required to wait until we have verified their identity with the parents or carers. Please understand that if you, or the adult collecting, are questioned about this it is purely for the safety of your child and is not meant to be unhelpful or judgemental in any way.
- These arrangements are also in place for children who attend our breakfast club and/or after school clubs.
- If an adult is late to collect a child, they will be kept in school and parents or carers will be contacted. If contact cannot be made, and the child is not collected within 1 hour, we will consult with the Local Authority Children's Social Care Services to get advice on how to proceed. It may be advised to refer to Slough Children First for further support and/or the Police.
- We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings as this does not guarantee the safety of all the children involved.

CHILDREN WHO ATTEND YEARS 3 AND 4 (lower Key Stage 2)

- While there is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own, we believe that pupils in year 3 and 4 should be still brought to and collected from school by a responsible adult or older sibling. Children should not be on the premises before or after school alone. This includes the drop off for breakfast club and/or after school clubs.

- Children in years 3 and 4 may be collected by an older sibling who attends Secondary School, with the permission of their parents or carers.
- We ask parents and carers to notify the school if other adults, or secondary school siblings are authorised to collect from school.
- In the interests of safety, if staff feel the older sibling is not able to ensure the safety of your child adequately then the school may need to speak to parents or carers first before release.

CHILDREN WHO ATTEND YEARS 5 AND 6

- Children in years 5 and 6 are permitted to walk to and from school alone, if a parent or carer has completed the relevant consent form.
- Breakfast club and after school club are outside of the usual school hours. We recommend that your child/ren are accompanied to ensure their safe arrival and departure at school. Particularly as in the winter months it can be cold and dark outside.
- Children in years 5 and 6 may be collected by an older sibling who attends Secondary School. In the interests of safety, if staff feel the older sibling is not able to ensure the safety of the child adequately then the school may need to speak to parents or carers first before release.
- Children who walk to and from school alone are allowed to bring mobile phones to school but they must be switched off and handed into the school office on entry and collected at the end of the day. Parents and carers must complete a consent form for this.

OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT DROP OFF AND COLLECTION

- If you have a special circumstance that requires your child to be released with a password then please contact Mrs Pinkney, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who can discuss this with you and arrange this.

Advice for Parents and Carers: Independent Walking and Safe Handover

- **School Policy Requirements:** Only Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are permitted to walk to or from school alone. You must inform the school in writing by submitting the permission slip before your child will be allowed to walk home independently. The school reserves the right to discuss concerns with you if independent walking is deemed unsafe or a safeguarding risk.
- **Evaluating Readiness:** Assess your child's confidence, maturity, and the risks along their route before making a decision. Consider whether you trust them to walk directly home to an awaiting adult, act sensibly with peers, navigate road safety, and correctly handle emergency or stranger situations. If you are uncertain about their reactions, reconsider letting them walk alone.
- **Teaching Road Safety:** Help your child build road awareness early by practicing route-finding, using crossings with clear visibility or traffic lights, and avoiding parked cars or bends. Teach them the Green Cross Code: look both ways, listen for incoming traffic, watch for cyclists, and remember that it is difficult to judge car speeds or assume drivers see them. Remind them never to be distracted while crossing, especially if they have a mobile phone.

- **Personal Safety Awareness:** Ensure your child understands the "Clever Never Goes" rule (which replaces "Stranger Danger"). Emphasise that they must never follow anyone, whether a stranger or an acquaintance, who is not a designated safe adult, and discuss what steps they should take if approached or if they need help.
- **Helpful Resources:** For further guidance on road safety, safe adults, and assessing independence, visit the Clever Never Goes Website and the NSPCC Out Alone Guidance.

Missing child protocol and procedures at drop off or collection times

There may be a number of scenarios where a child could go missing during a transition or at a handover time:

A) A child has been handed over to a parent/carer, by a member of staff, and then the child and parent/carer have become separated:

- Parent/carer waits at the classroom door with a member of staff in case the child returns to the classroom.
- Ask parent/carer where they last saw the child and a description of what they are wearing, name, age/class and any SEND needs.
- Alert Safeguarding Team/SLT and other staff members will also be directed to start the search - provide a description of the child to aid the search.
- Office staff to call home to see if the child has arrived home unaccompanied, or with another adult.
- Send premises staff to the gates and alert other staff on the gates to monitor for any children without an adult.
- Staff to retrace the steps that the parent/carer took and search outside spaces.
- Nominate staff to walk the journey home to see if the child can be found on route.
- Staff to check indoors e.g toilets, classroom, hallways, lost property, hall, clubs, canteen.
- Staff to communicate via walkie-talkies and/or whatsapp groups
- If the child is found, provide comfort if needed and escort back to the classroom, or office, where the parent/carer is waiting.
- If the child is found on route to their home by school staff, they must alert the school and wait with the child until the parent arrives.
- Debrief and remind the child what to do if they get lost again.
- If the child has not been found after **20 minutes** the police must be called on **999**
- Parent/carer to be supported by school staff.

B) If the child has not been handed over to a parent/carer, and can't be found:

- A member of staff would contact home (including any other contact numbers if unsuccessful) to see if they have returned home alone and explain the situation.
- If at home time, ask the parents or person at home if anyone else could have come to collect them.
- Notify the Principal and/or a Vice Principal and DSL/DDSL. Any available member of staff should then search every possible accessible place such as toilets, cloakroom, welfare room, cupboards, store room etc.
- Notify the Premises team so they can ensure that the site is secure and then join the search for the child.
- The Chair of the Academy Council and the Governor responsible for safeguarding would be informed.
- If at home time, ask any children remaining with the class teacher if they saw the child leave with anyone.

- Check any before school or after school options that the child could be at.
- Locate any siblings that the child may have and ask if they know where the child might be.
- Staff to carry out a search of the whole school site and surrounding roads adjacent to the school.
- Once all options have been exhausted, reviewed and ruled out call the police **within 20 minutes**.
- A full incident report would be prepared and, if necessary procedures would be adjusted.

C) A child who is permitted to walk home alone, does not return home at the expected time and the parent/carer contacts the school

- Parent/carer remains at home and any family available searches the immediate area
- Parent/carers alert other family members or friends to check if they have seen the child.
- If the parent/carer states that the child has already been missing for more than **ten minutes**, the family must call the police on **999**.
- Parent/carer and class teacher provide a description of the child, age/class and any SEND needs.
- School staff are nominated to walk the child's journey home.
- Local area spaces such as the park, corner shop are searched by other members of staff.
- If the child has not been located by school staff after **ten minutes** of being missing, the police must be called on **999**.
- Parent/carer to contact the school if the child arrives home at any point during the search.
- Once the child has been located, two members of staff will safely return the child home.
- If the child is reported to have returned home by a family member, a 'proof of life visit' can be completed by two members of school staff.
- Pastoral support provided to the child as required and safety procedures to be revised with the child in school.

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

Permission for pupils to walk to and from school alone

Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this slip to the school office.

Name of child: ……..

Class: 5…… or 6……

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on a regular basis. I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in the 'Safe Handover/Children Walking Home Alone Policy.

I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk 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.

Signed: ……..... Date: …….

Name printed: ……..