



HHS Policy

Walking to and from school without an adult.

What the law says

HHS acknowledges that there are no laws around age or distance of walking to 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."* However, as a school we are also responsible for the welfare of our pupils and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring their safety. We also ask parents to note that we have a legal obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore, we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.

Our position as a school

Our position is that all children should be accompanied to and from school by a responsible adult. This takes into account the young age of Primary school children and the fact that the school is located near several busy roads. Unfortunately, they have been a number of accidents and narrowly avoided incidents over the years on these roads which adds to our concern. We will only hand over pupils to named adults. Pupils will not be handed over to any other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements, preferably by letter. *We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.*

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to school, you should assess any risks associated with the route and your child's confidence. Work with your child to build up their independence while walking to school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. There are lots of ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are driven to school do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they start to walk to school independently. Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. The best way to do this is **to walk with your children from a young age, teaching them about crossing the road, learning how to navigate and a host of other skills.** This helps them gain the experience and confidence to deal with traffic and way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

Other things to bear in mind when deciding

Will you give your child a mobile phone to have with them when walking to school? Will your child use their phone whilst walking? Primary aged children are easy targets for theft – visibly having a phone on their person makes your child a target for crime. Being on the phone whilst walking is a very dangerous distraction from the hazards around them. Can you trust your child not to play games on their phone etc whilst walking to/from school?

HHS has a strict, non-negotiable, no mobile phone in school policy for all pupils and sanctions will be applied if your child is found to have their phone on them on the school premises. If you want your child to have a mobile phone with them when walking to school, they **MUST** give the phone to the member of staff on the gate before entering the playground. It is the child's responsibility to ensure the phone is handed in and collected again at the end of the day. HHS accepts no liability for the phone during the day.

Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street and driveways; never become distracted and **NEVER WALK WHILST ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE**. This distracts you from paying attention to traffic and other pedestrians but also makes you a very easy and obvious target for crime.
- 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 and avoid crossing behind parked cars or on bends in the road. Look both ways before crossing; listen for traffic coming; cross while keeping an eye on traffic.
- Look out for cyclists.
- Remember that drivers may not see them, even if they can see the driver. Cars mount curbs and cross driveways at speed and many children are too short to be seen by a distracted driver
- Remember that it is hard to judge the speed of a car so be cautious.
- Never, ever, follow someone who is either a stranger or someone they know but 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). And if that person tries to convince him to go with him or tries to physically get close to him, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad/mum!" and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as they can.

Is your child ready for the responsibility?

When deciding whether your child is ready for this responsibility you might want to consider the following:

1. Do you trust them to walk straight home?
2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly if with a friend?
3. Are they road safety aware? Would they use their phones whilst walking?

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?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

IF YOU ARE NOT CONFIDENT ABOUT HOW YOUR CHILD WOULD REACT, THEN YOU SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WHETHER YOU SHOULD ALLOW THEM TO WALK ON THEIR OWN.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility then you must inform the school by letter and by completing the permission slip below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given in writing.

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

HHS Permission to walk to school/home unaccompanied

I attest that I have full parental responsibility for my child and hereby give my permission for my child to regularly walk to and/or from school without being accompanied by an adult from the date signed below.

I acknowledge that the roads around Holland House School are very busy and I have explained to my child the all safety aspects of walking on their own.

I have read the HHS Walking Unaccompanied Guide and am satisfied that my child can cross roads without an adult and that they are alert to drivers mounting the kerb to enter driveways and other dangers.

I understand that the job of the member of Holland House Staff on the school gate is to monitor the people coming into the playground and that they cannot leave their post to help my child cross roads or stop traffic for them.

I understand and fully accept that neither Holland House School nor any member of Holland House staff can be held accountable in any way for my child's safety once they have left the school premises.

I acknowledge that HHS has a strict, non-negotiable, "no mobile phones in school" policy for all pupils and that it is my child's responsibility to leave their phone with the member of staff at the gate. I agree that sanctions will apply if my child is found with their phone in school. I am in full agreement that HHS accepts no liability for the phone during the day and that if it is lost, damaged or stolen I have no recourse against the school for this.

I acknowledge that the school has a legal obligation to alert relevant authorities should they believe that a child's welfare is at risk.

Name and Surname of child	
In Year	
Your full name and surname	
Your Relationship to child	
Date	
Signature	