



Children Walking/Cycling to & From School alone Policy

Walking to school is a useful way for children to gain the benefits of regular exercise early, which research has shown helps to prevent health problems in later life. Maybe you let your kids walk to school alone all the time. But is it legal? And what sort of safety considerations should you take into account?

INTRODUCTION

It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure their child arrives safely and promptly to school each morning. Whilst walking to school it is understood that parents/carers ensure that their child takes the safest route possible and is accompanied at all times by a responsible adult.

Children need assistance dealing with the traffic environment until at least the age of 10 as they are not equipped physically or developmentally to make the crucial decisions to keep them safe. Like learning to drive a car, children need practise and experience to walk in the traffic environment.

Alongside the benefits of learning road safety, it is great chance to spend time with your family and good exercise!! Children are vulnerable road users. Anywhere where there is a potential for moving vehicles is a potentially dangerous traffic situation for children. This includes residential areas, car-parks, at traffic lights, along footpaths, pedestrian and other crossings, driveways, quiet streets, and busy streets.

Many children below the age of 10 years do not have the capability or judgment to handle many pedestrian situations. Children need to be accompanied and closely supervised by a parent or adult carer to keep them safer.

The area around Manly Hospital, St Patricks & the International College of Management are very busy with constant traffic so high vigilance is required.

During Grade 5 and 6 parents/carers may decide that their child is capable of independently walking/cycling to & from school. If this is the case, parents/carers make the informed decision that they are responsible for their child's safety on their journey to school, even if they are not physically present.

It is advised that parents/carers ensure their child is fully conversant with road safety, the bike is road worthy and appropriate safety gear is used.

PURPOSE

The following guidelines set out Farmhouse Montessori Primary advice, policy and procedures should parents/carers wish to allow their child to walk to or from school without an adult.

SCOPE

It is the responsibility of the parent/carers to assess the route on which the child will walk home from school or to school to ensure they are confident their child has the ability to walk home or to school safely, even if their child is accompanied to school by a parent/carers. Crossing busy main roads and walking through secluded areas is discouraged.

It is also advised to the parents/carers that their child knows their own home phone number and other emergency contacts and either has a mobile or money for a pay phone should they need to call home in an emergency. Some mobile phones have a GPS tracking system and having an emergency ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in contacts is recommended.

Safeguarding is paramount and parents/carers need to ensure their child is fully aware of stranger danger and how to report any concerns to an appropriate adult.

Should a parent/carer wish to allow their child to walk to school unaccompanied by an adult, parents/carers are asked to inform the school and the walking/cycling/travelling consent form is completed/updated so that a register can be compiled of key children to identify should a child not arrive at school at the appropriate time in the morning.

It is essential that written consent is provided by the parent/carer to authorise independent travel to and from the school. The cycle/walking home policy must contain all emergency contact numbers and the parent/carer must notify the school and update the consent form in the event of any changes.

A model walk/cycle alone consent form is available.

The school may refuse a proposal if a child is not deemed able to walk/cycle home alone.

If the school has concerns about a particular child's ability to travel safely or if a child lives too far away more than 15 minutes away permission for the child to walk home alone may be refused.

There must always be an appropriate adult/parent/carer at home to meet the child on their arrival. Parents/carers need to be aware when walking home/cycling home the school will not know if a child arrives home as planned. Hence the parent/carer needs to ensure adequate safety protocols are in place should an emergency/accident arise.

If the school feels the welfare and safety of the child walking/cycling to school is compromised the school may revoke the arrangement and will notify parents/carers accordingly.

It is recommended that ONLY children in Years 5 and 6 be allowed to walk to school unaccompanied by an adult and only then if the parent/carer is confident that it is safe for them to do so. However individual cases will be discussed with parents/carers.

As the responsible body receiving children from home at the start of the day, the school will ensure that morning registrations are taken in each class. If a child is found to be absent and no prior notice of such absence has been received from the child's parent/carer, the school recognises a clear responsibility to contact the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for absence or highlight that a child has not attended morning registration.

It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that school is informed should their child be unable to attend school for any reason in accordance with the school attendance policy. If a child who walks/cycles to school unattended is not in school contact will be sought with the parent/carer within 30 minutes or the schools protocol] of morning registration taking place and an absence without reason being noted by the classroom staff.

If upon contact it is confirmed that a child has left home with the intention of walking/cycling to school but has not arrived and therefore an issue of a missing child is noted, the school will contact the police immediately. The school's designated senior person for safeguarding/child protection will then be immediately informed and safeguarding procedures for child protection/children missing procedures will be followed.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to assess the route on which the child will walk home from school to ensure they are confident their child has the ability to walk home safely. Crossing busy main roads and walking through secluded areas is discouraged.

A register of children who have permission to walk/cycle home alone after the school day will be kept by the school.

If a child has left the school to walk home but does not arrive home when expected and direct contact with the child has not been established, the parent/carer should contact the school in the first instance to seek clarification from the responsible adult who dismissed their child as to the time they left school. However the school may not be contactable after home time and therefore it will be parents/carers responsibility to notify the police.

PARENTS WILL ENSURE:

How can you prepare your kids?

Before your child heads off to school by themselves (or with friends), there are a few safety precautions you should take.

To avoid injury:

- Never let a child under the age of 10 cross the street alone.
- Teach your child to recognise and obey traffic signals and pavement markings.
- Choose the safest route between home and school and practice walking it with your child until he/she can demonstrate traffic-safety awareness.

Remind your child to:

- Stick to well-travelled streets, use the same route every day and avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, carparks or alleys.
- Carry backpacks and bags close to their body, not dangling by the straps.
- Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket, not a back pocket.
- Don't wear shoes or clothing that restrict movement.
- Cross streets only at pedestrian crossings; never enter streets from between parked cars or from behind shrubbery.
- Always look both ways before crossing the street.
- Walk -- don't run -- across intersections.
- Be vigilante and obey the traffic lights.
- Switch direction or cross the street if they think someone is following them or if they feel unsafe. Walk toward an open shop, restaurant or yell for help.
- Don't speak to strangers; if a stranger approaches, tell a teacher, a school principal or a trusted adult.
- Watch out for cars at every driveway and intersection
- Don't accept rides from strangers.

Parent Confirmation

Sometimes this permission is given at the last minute in this case an email from the parents email contact to both the school office and the class teacher **ONLY** for students to walk home will be excepted and this email will be placed into the student file.

Source

- Kids Safe NSW
- NSW Police Department

Policy Review Date	Modification	Reviewed
Created on Feb 2018		2020
March 2020	Parent confirmation added	2021
6 TH April 2020	Parents will ensure inserted	2022

PERMISSION NOTE:

CONFIRMATION/CONSENT THAT MY CHILD MAY WALK/CYCLE TO AND FROM SCHOOL/HOME ALONE

I confirm that _____ who is in Grade _____ at The Farmhouse Montessori Primary School may walk/cycle to school and from school alone.

I confirm that I have read and understood the school's walking/cycling to and from home alone policy.

I understand that the school recommends only children in Grades 5 & 6 are to walk/cycle to school alone and walk/cycle home alone.

I understand that if my child will be walking to school alone (without adult supervision) I will advise the school beforehand by either phone or email to the school office or directly to the class educator who will note this on the register.

I understand that if my child doesn't arrive at school by 9am that the Police will be called as per the school policy.

In the event of an emergency please contact:

(Parent/carer)

Contact Number(s):

Or _____ (Name/Relationship to child) on _____

Name: _____

Dated: _____

I will notify the school immediately of any changes to the emergency contact details.

I understand the school may revoke this consent if child safety is compromised.

A copy of this permission form will be kept in your students file and will have to be updated each year.