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Tuesday 8th February 2022

Dear Parents / Carers

End of Day Procedure / Children Walking Home Alone

In the interest of safeguarding our children, and ensuring our end of day practices are safe, achievable and maintainable we are revising our permission to walk home procedure. **Therefore, from February 28th all previous arrangements and permissions are null and void. We apologise if you have recently written or emailed in permissions but now ask all parents to complete the walking home permissions on the app. This will ensure all information is gathered safely in one place, accessible by the school office & controlled by yourselves.**

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."

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this does not disallow independent travel. However, as a school we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils and 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.

Pupils in Foundation Stage, KS1, Year 3 and 4

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 should walk to or from school on their own. In addition we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are KS3 or above. Primary pupils are not permitted to collect other primary siblings. Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement.

Pupils in Upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6 only)

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 children 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.

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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.

Teach your child to:

Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted. Always cross where there are traffic lights or on the designated crossing; 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; 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.

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).

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

Do you trust them to walk straight home?

Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?

Are they road safety aware?

Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?

Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?

Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do?

Would they know what to do if they needed help?

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. Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school and on the way home. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again. School may also ask parents to bring children to school or collect them if they feel that daily face to face contact is required or if school have concerns about behaviour of safety.

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, then you must inform the school by completing the CONSENT section on the 'my school app' – PERMISSION TO WALK AT 3.20pm. For any permanent changes you can add or retract your permission, but changes require up to 48 working hours' notice. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given.

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Permission for pupils to wait at the Ash Path School Gate

As a bridge between walking home with an adult and walking independently, some parents may like children to be collected at the school gate (Years 5 and 6 only).

If you wish your child to meet you at the school gate at the end of the day, please inform the school by completing the **CONSENT section on the 'my school app' – PERMISSION TO WALK AT 3.20pm option**. For any permanent changes you can add or retract your permission, but changes require up to 48 working hours' notice. Your child will be kept with their Teacher unless this permission has been given. Please can you discuss with your child the importance of not wandering from the gate. You also need to be confident that they would not go off with any other adults other than those you have made arrangements with. The gate is not supervised and we do not have the staffing to do this. We would also advise that you ensure you arrive in good time to meet your child and that they know what to do if you are not there.

Walking home from clubs at 4.30pm

There will be a reminder when selecting a club place on Pay360 that you need to give your 4.30pm home time permission. If you want your child your child to be released by the club leader please complete the **CONSENT section on the 'my school app' – and chose the relevant option, eg. 'CLUB PERMISSION TO WALK HOME AT 4.30pm'**. **For any permanent changes you can add or retract your permission, but changes require 48 working hours' notice. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given.** The club home time permissions will be deleted every half term and we will ask you to reselect your option.

Late collections / Failure to collect.

We always ask parents to call a head if they are running late before children are released from school, before 3pm ideally, then we can then advise the children that their grown up is on the way. If it is just a few minutes, children will stay with their Teacher who will bring them to the school office. Children who are not collected are then sent to our Abbey Oaks wrap around provision and parents charged the late collection fee of £2.00. If they are not collected within 15 minutes the standard Abbey Oaks session fee will then be applied.

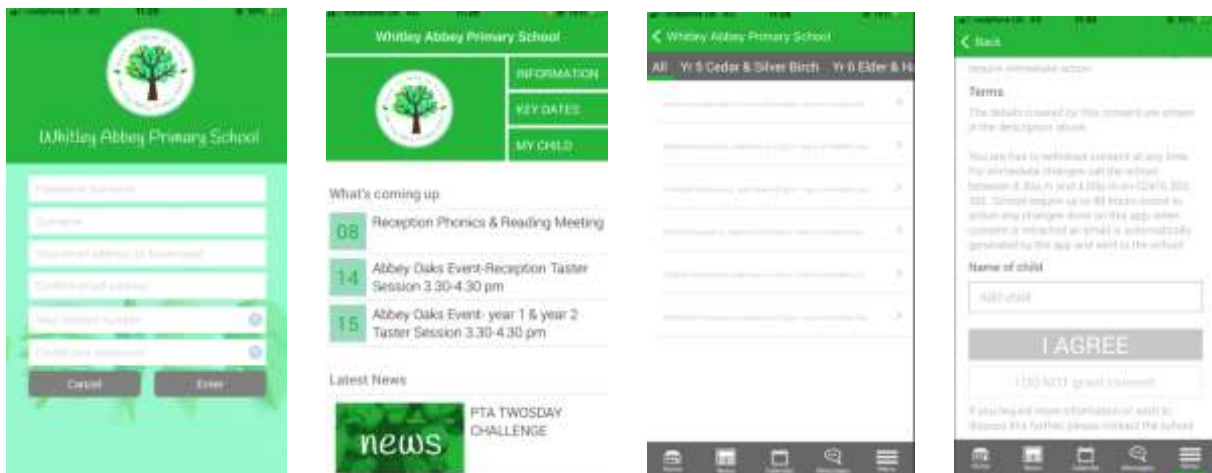
To confirm, all previous arrangements are null and void from the close of day Thursday 17th February 2022 and we ask you to complete the walking home permissions on the school app in good time ready for children's dismissal at the end of the day on Monday 28th February. This will ensure all permissions correspond throughout the school, that there is no confusion at the end of the day and more importantly all the children are safely released in the correct manner.

Yours sincerely

Mr Robbie Walker
Head Teacher



1. Download my school app (if you haven't already) & allow notifications
2. Enter Whitley & select our school from the drop-down list
3. Register (with the email address linked to your child on the school system) & sign in
4. Menu > Consent > select from the options and complete consent if you agree.
(School get notified by the app when you remove consent)



While you are on the app, to make sure you only get relevant information,

Menu > Settings > Choose notification groups

Check out the calendar & news sections. You can even report your child's absence via the app.