



Belswains Primary School Drop-off and Collection Policy

**Agreed By the Headteacher
Summer Term 2024**

Next Review Date: Summer Term 2027

DW Reviewed 25 April 2024

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy sets of the school procedures if:

- Pupils arriving/leaving school without an adult,
- Pupils that are collected late,
- Pupils that are not collected,
- There are concerns about a parent/carers ability to offer safe care.

1. CHILDREN TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SCHOOL ALONE

“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.” (Is it legal? A parent’s guide to the law by the Family and Parenting Institute - June 2011)

The NSPCC advise the following:

- children under eight should not be outdoors for a considerable length of time unaccompanied.
- children under the age of about twelve should not be home alone for more than a brief period.

Pupils in Year 5 or 6 may leave site unaccompanied, with permission from their parents/carers. If a parent/carer wish to let their child/children arrive/leave school independently then they must put this in writing to the school. The school is not responsible for the safety of pupils on their journey to and from school. If parents choose to let their child travel to/from school independently, then they should assess the risks associated with the school route and their own child’s confidence. Parents should work with their child to build up their independence, while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

2. SUPERVISION ON THE SCHOOL SITE

Parents/carers should note that the school does not have to provide a member of staff to supervise children before classroom doors open (unless they are attending the, paid for, Breakfast Club) and therefore the welfare of children until that time is the responsibility of parents/carers. Nevertheless, whenever possible, the school will make one member of staff available on the playground for emergency contact e.g., if a pupil falls and hurts themselves the school will provide medical assistance. At the end of the school day, there is no supervision provided (apart from the organised school clubs). Pupils and parents/carers are requested to leave the premises soon after the end of the school day, and not to use the school fields or equipment for their own purposes. Parents are responsible for their child’s behaviour and any accidents that may occur after the end of the school day, and on their journey home.

3. DROP-OFF AND COLLECTION BY OLDER SIBLINGS

It is the parent/carer’s responsibility to ensure that their child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person. There is no minimum age set in law when a young person is allowed to remain in charge of another child, however it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk.

The school will always put the safeguarding of pupils first and will not dismiss pupils into the care of siblings if there are concerns.

Parents might find it useful to consider the following factors when deciding whether children should be left unsupervised or in the care of an older sibling:

- Have the risks posed by leaving a child alone or in the care of an older sibling at home or walking to/from school been considered?
- How old are the children?
- How mature are the children? What is their level of understanding or awareness about being left unsupervised or walking to or from school?
- How comfortable are the children with the arrangements (this includes the younger child and the older child who is acting as 'carer')?
- Where will the children be left? Is it a safe place?
- How long and how often will the children be left?
- How far away will the parent/carer be? Will they be easily contactable?
- Do any of the children (this includes the older sibling acting as 'carer') have additional needs - medical, emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties or disabilities? How will these needs be met in the absence of the parent/carer?
- Does the child or sibling caring for another child know what to do in an emergency? Does the child know who they can contact in an emergency? Have instructions been left, e.g., in case of a fire?
- What are the expectations of the children during this time?
- Do the children have knowledge about how to keep themselves and younger siblings safe?
- What is their level of knowledge when it comes to first aid?
- How well do the siblings get on? How will tension be managed in the absence of the parent/carer?

4. FACTORS THAT MAY COMPROMISE A PARENT/CARER'S ABILITY TO OFFER SAFE CARE

The use of drugs or alcohol or the presence of mental health difficulties does not in itself necessarily mean that parents/carers are uncaring, incompetent, or unable to offer safe care to their children. However, if the extent of a parent's own needs mean that they cannot keep their child safe from harm, the school will make a safeguarding referral to Children's Services. If an adult with parental responsibility presents at school and staff are concerned that their presentation suggests they are unable to offer safe care, steps will be taken to clarify the situation and assess the risk to the child.

The school will:

1. Be mindful of the safety of staff and the safety of the children in school.
2. Talk to the parent/carer and ascertain if they can offer safe care for their children: How is the adult presenting - are they staggering, speaking incoherently? Do the parent/carer's needs compromise their ability to meet the children's basic physical and psychological needs? If so, how? How do they intend to get home? Is the parent driving? Are they fit to do so? Is the parent/carer in sole care of the child? Can the adult identify another parent or supportive adult to be with them and the child?
3. Make a safeguarding referral to Children's Services if, based on the factors above, there are concerns about the adult's ability to care for the child.
4. Aim to retain care of the child whilst awaiting the advice of the Police and Children's Services. Schools do not have the authority legally to retain a child against a parent/carer's will therefore, if this is not possible, the school will consider ringing for a Police welfare check on the non-emergency number, 101.
5. Call 999 if it is judged that a child or another person (including staff) may be imminently at risk of serious danger, e.g. - where an intoxicated parent/carer is behaving violently or is threatening violence such that the belief is that the threats may be carried out thus

compromising the immediate safety or care of a child, or, - where a parent/carer may place others in danger by driving a car whilst unfit through alcohol or drugs.

5. LATE COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Parents and carers share in the responsibility to work with school staff to ensure their children are safe and in the care of a responsible adult.

Parents should notify the school immediately (by contacting the school office on 01442 264324) if it becomes apparent that the person collecting their child may be late. If the person collecting the pupil is going to be more than 10 minutes late, the pupil will be taken to the school office where they will wait to be collected. If a pupil is not collected within 10 minutes of school finishing and the school has not been notified that the person collecting the child is going to be late, the school will:

- Check for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- Attempt to contact the parents/carers on their home, work, and mobile numbers.
- Telephone the emergency contacts that have been provided by the parent/carer.
- Keep a record of incidents where parents/carers are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents on CPOMS.
- For repeat incidents: parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Headteacher for a discussion about their circumstances.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by someone who does not have parental responsibility, whether this is a regular or pre-planned arrangement, the parent/carer must put this in writing. In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the parent/carer must give verbal consent for an agreed person to take the child home.

6. NON-COLLECTION PROCEDURE

In the event of a child not being collected from school and the school receiving no notification from the parent/carer within 45 minutes of the end of the school day, the school will follow its child protection procedures, i.e., the Police will be informed, and a safeguarding referral will be made to Children's Services. The school will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken and calls made to contact the parents/carers and emergency contacts. Under no circumstances will school staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the child home with them. Once the situation has been resolved, parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the steps they could take to avoid a recurrence of this situation, e.g., ensuring that the school has current contact details, including emergency contacts.

7. REGULARLY TRANSPORTED CHILDREN

Regularly transported children in this context refers to children who have a statutory entitlement of free home to school transport from the Local Authority. This includes:

- children who have been placed in a school that is not within the statutory walking distance (2 miles for a pupil under 8, and 3 miles for those aged 8 plus)
- children who have been placed in a school where there is no safe walking route
- children from low income families if they are aged 8 - 11 and live more than 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school
- children with special educational needs or disability (SEND) who have a statement which has transport requirements written into it.

The responsibility of the parent/carer is to ensure their child is ready for collection at the designated time as notified by the Local Authority or operator and that there is a suitable person to receive their child at the end of the school day.

