



Blessed Robert Widmerpool CVA Walking To and From Home Policy

'And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.' Luke 2: 40

'Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.' Proverbs 22: 6

Aims

Blessed Robert Widmerpool CVA recognises the benefits of walking to and from school:

- Walking is a form of exercise, and exercise has a positive effect on focus, mental health and physical health.
- Walking can instil vital understanding of road safety in a child. They learn how to navigate road crossings, pavements and hazards.
- Walking fosters a sense of environmental stewardship, which is a key Catholic Social Teaching.

As children mature, we recognise the importance of allowing children to walk to and from school. It nurtures independence, responsibility and enables them to develop a sense of accountability as well as the importance of earning trust from adults.

Legalities

There are no laws dictating at what age or over what distance children should be allowed to walk/commute to school independently. 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."

A parent's legal responsibility is to ensure their child gets to school safely and attends regularly. School also has the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of their pupils. In order to do this, we follow clear policy that dictates good practice in ensuring the safety of our pupils. We will work with relevant authorities if we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

Pupils in EYFS, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5:

At Blessed Robert Widmerpool CVA, no pupil in year groups EYFS to Year 5 is permitted walk/commute to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises, either before the school building doors have opened and once the school day is done.

At the start of the day, pupils should arrive on the school premises no earlier than **8.40 am** and be supervised by a responsible adult until they have seen their child go into the school building (doors open between 8.45-8.55 am).

At the end of the day, pupils should be collected on time. Pupils will only be handed over to named adults or older siblings over the age of 12 years (the age recommended by the NSPCC). Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement.

If no one turns up to collect a child in these year groups they will be kept in school and parents contacted. Please note that finishing times are either 3.20 pm or 3.25 pm. If this happens repeatedly, a meeting will take place between parents and school so that they can work together to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Pupils in Year 6

At BRW, we believe that walking/commuting to school is an opportunity to develop road safety skills, socialise safely, grow in confidence and independence and prepare for the transition to secondary school.

Though there is no set age at which children are ready to walk/commute to school or home on their own, there are several factors that will determine whether or not a child is ready. Because these factors are personal and unique to the child and family circumstances, our policy at BRW states that only Year 6 children can walk/commute to and from school independently, and even then, the child should be deemed by both parents and school 'ready' to do so.

When making this decision, the following questions associated with risks should be considered:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do you trust them to walk straight home?2. Do you trust them to behave sensibly when with a friend?3. Are they road safety aware?4. Have you taught them the safest route to and from school?5. Would they know what to do if a stranger approaches them?6. Would they have the confidence to refuse to do what a stranger asked?7. Would they know the best action to take if a stranger tried to make them do something they didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick or fight)?8. Would they know what to do if they needed help?9. Would they know who best to approach to get help? |
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If you are not confident about how your child would react then you should make the informed decision to delay allowing them to walk/commute on their own.

In addition, to ensure your child is as equipped as far as possible to walk/commute to and from school, as parents, we ask that you teach your child to follow the below actions:

- Make sure they know their home address and your telephone number by heart.
- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross where possible at intersections there are traffic lights. 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/accept a lift from 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/her to go with him/her or tries to physically get close to him, then scream, "Help! This is not my dad!" or, "Help! This is not my mum!" and run away. If they grab them, tell your child to kick, punch, and hit as hard as they can.
- If any incidents occur and they are closest to school than home, they should return straight to school and speak to a member of staff there.
- If they ever feel like they are in immediate danger, they should call the police straight away.

As pupils of BRW who wear our uniform and represent our school, we expect them to behave responsibly when walking to and from school. We ask that you remind your child to follow the below code of conduct:

- Respect fellow pedestrians: pavements should be used for walking only, not cycling/scootering
- Respect fellow pedestrians: ensure there is room for oncoming pedestrians to use the pavement
- Respect fellow pedestrians: ensure behaviour, including volume, language and actions, are representative of BRW's values and virtues (see Appendix A)

If pupils cannot demonstrate the above behaviours when walking to and from school, school will deem them as not yet mature enough or independent enough to do so. In response to this, we will insist pupils are supervised by a responsible adult on their journey to and from school. This decision can be reviewed at a time both parents and school feel is appropriate.

Year 5 – Summer Term

Year 5 pupils, in the second half of the summer term, have historically been given permission to begin walking/commuting to and from school on their own in order to prepare for the transition to Year 6. This policy will remain with the starting period being **after May half-term** each year. Parents considering letting their Year 5 child walk/commute to and from school should consider the above questions and codes of conduct and use this to judge whether or not their child is ready.

Mobile Phones:

We understand that, for safety reasons, you may wish for your child to carry a mobile phone if walking home unaccompanied. Mobile phone devices are permitted **only** for children walking to and from home alone.

For safeguarding and educational reasons, mobile phones must be switched off and out of sight once children are on school grounds. Once inside the building, devices must be handed to the class teacher each morning to be stored securely. **All devices must be clearly named.** Devices will then be returned at the end of the school day, with the expectation that they will not be switched on or visible in any way until the children leaves the school premises. If a child does not follow this code of conduct, devices will be confiscated.

Please see BRW's separate 'Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy' for further clarity.

Written Agreement:

If you decide that your child is ready for this responsibility, then you must complete the agreement form (available from the school office or website). 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.

Agreed: April 2024

Review: April 2025

Walking To and From School Parent Agreement

Child's Name:


- ✓ I give permission for my child to walk to and from school unaccompanied each day at the appropriate times.
- ✓ I understand that my child is my responsibility outside of school hours (walking to and from school).
- ✓ I understand that if my child brings a mobile phone to school, it must be switched off and out of sight once on the school premises, and handed to the class teacher once inside the school building.
- ✓ I understand that the mobile phone will be the responsibility of my child at all other times.
- ✓ I understand that if the school deems that my child requires more time to mature and understand their responsibility, my child will not be permitted to walk to and from school.

Signed:


Date:

Relationship to child:

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5 R Values at BRW



Responsibility - for our own actions and the world.

Relationships - with each other and our community.

Resilience - rising to challenges and never giving up.

Resourcefulness - using the resources around us to ensure we can overcome any difficulties or challenges.

Reflectiveness - thinking about our actions, reflecting on mistakes to help us improve.

Whole School Virtues



- Show **love** and **respect** for everyone 
- Be the **best** version of you  
- Take care of our **environment** 
- **Move calmly** around school 
- Wear our **uniform** with **pride** 