

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy



Pupil Collection and Walking To and From School Alone Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 Our Mission

Our Mission
at St Margaret Clitherow Academy

We will:

1. **Love** Jesus in all that we do.
2. *Aim high* so we all reach our potential.
3. *Respect and celebrate* our differences.
4. *Like St Margaret Clitherow*, have the **integrity**, **faith** and **courage** to show our love of God to all.
5. Make the best use of our gifts to **serve** God, our Church and those who need us.

"Love one another as I have loved you."
John 13:34

1.2 Our Vision

HONESTY
COMPASSION
LOVE
COURAGE

Our SMC Values

COMPASSION **SERVICE**
HONESTY **TOLERANCE**
COURAGE **INTEGRITY**

"Love one another as I have loved you."
John 13:34

SERVICE
TOLERANCE
FAITH
INTEGRITY

At St Margaret Clitherow Academy, our Mission Statement and core values are central to everything we do. Guided by John 13:34-37, **"To love one another as I have loved you,"** our SMC Values – **Love**, **Faith**, **Service**, **Tolerance**, **Integrity**, **Courage**, **Honesty**, **Compassion** — shape how we treat others and foster a shared sense of purpose and respect within our school community and beyond.

We strive to provide a supportive, caring, and friendly environment where all pupils can learn and grow, focused on improving their life chances and helping them to maximise their potential. At St Margaret Clitherow, pupils are supported to connect the school's mission, rules and values to their lives at school, at home, and in society. Through the example of Jesus, the life of St Margaret Clitherow, and the teachings of the Catholic Church, we aim to nurture children who:

- Have a strong faith in God and a passion for celebrating and living out their faith.
- Demonstrate integrity, understanding what is right and wrong.
- Possess the courage to serve others and advocate for their beliefs and what is just.

Together, we work to develop a community rooted in faith, compassion, and a commitment to making a positive impact on the world.

'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

1.3 Aims

St Margaret Clitherow believes it is essential to ensure all pupils are safe coming to school and when they leave school at the end of the day. We appreciate that, for many families, arrangements need to be flexible and it may be that several people care for the child after school. For this reason, we have set out clear procedures that all staff and parents must adhere to, to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Keep pupils safe.
- Ensure all staff members are aware of the correct procedures for the end of the school day.
- Make parents aware of the expectations regarding collecting children.
- Highlight the importance of parent-school communication.
- To set clear expectation of pupil behaviour and conduct when parents allow their children to walk to and from school alone.
- To clarify parental responsibility when they choose for their child to walk to and from school alone.

1.4 Consultation

This policy is still at the draft phase and in consultation.

This policy was written by Sarah Sweeney-McGinty, Headteacher in consultation with:

- Teaching staff – during a staff meeting, January 2025
- Support Staff – During staff briefings, January 2025.
- Parents – via Questionnaire
- Governors – Local Governing Body Meeting, 2025

1.5 Legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002

- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2024) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2023) 'Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility'

2 Procedures and practice

2.1 The school day

- . Nursery - 8.45am-11.45am (Morning Session)
- . Nursery - 12.15pm-3.15pm (Afternoon Session)
- . Reception - 8.45am-3.15pm
- . Year 1 - 8.45am-3.15pm
- . Year 2 - 8.45am-3.15pm
- . Year 3 - 8.45am-3.20pm
- . Year 4 - 8.45am-3.20pm
- . Year 5 - 8.45am-3.20pm
- . Year 6 - 8.45am-3.20pm

2.2 The start of the school day

Nursery - Parents and children line up with children along the fence outside EYFS gate. The gate opens at 8.45am. An adult will come and meet the children. Children should stand with their parent/carer and be supervised at all times. **School starts at 8.45am.**

Reception - Children will walk through the green gate next to Year 1 and 2. Children will walk onto the playground and line up next to the EYFS fence. Parents are welcome to join children on to the playground. Gates open at 8.40am. Parents should supervise children at all times before 8.40am. The class teacher will meet the children at 8.40am. Parents will walk back out of school via Year 1 and 2 gate. **School starts at 8.45am.**

Year 1 - Children will walk through the gate next to Year 1 and 2 onto the playground and line up on the football pitch. Parents are welcome to join their children on to the playground. Gates open at 8.40am. Parents should supervise children at all times before 8.40am. The class teacher will meet the children at 8.40am. Parents will walk back out of school via Year 1 and 2 gate. **School starts at 8.45am.**

Years 2-4 - Children will walk through the gate next to Year 1 and 2 onto the playground and join their line. Gates open at 8.40am. Parents should supervise children at all times before 8.40am. The class teacher will meet the children at 8.40am. **School starts at 8.45am.**

Years 5 and 6 - Children will walk through the gate next to Year 1 and 2 onto the playground and join their line. Gates open at 8.40am. The class teacher will meet the children at 8.40am. **School starts at 8.45am.**

Breakfast Club – Children in Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2 who attend Breakfast club will join their lines on the playground at 8.40am
Children in Reception who attend breakfast club will wait in the hall and be escorted to their classroom by an adult.

2.3 The end of the school day

Nursery - Parents to stand outside the front door of the main reception. Please do not ring the bell and ensure the entrance remains clear. An adult will bring the children to reception and will dismiss them through the red door once they see their parent. The children will remain in reception until their adult has been seen by the staff member at the door. **School finishes at 3.15pm.**

Reception - Parents to come through the green EYFS gates at 3:10pm and line up along the fence at the side of the EYFS building. Please ensure you do not go past the wooden gate or block the steps. An adult will come to the green chairs at 3.15pm and call each child individually from the classroom. The children will remain in their classroom until their adult has been seen by the staff member. Once collected, children should remain with their parent/carer at all times. **School finishes at 3.15pm.**

Years 1 and 2 – Parents to wait at the green gate next to Years 1 and 2. Children will be dismissed from the classrooms at 3.15pm. Teachers will dismiss children when they see a parent/carer. Once collected, children should remain with their parent/carer at all times. **School finishes at 3.15pm.**

Years 3 and 4 - Children will walk out at 3.20pm and line up either side of the path at the KS1 gate. Teachers will dismiss children when they see a parent/carer. Once collected, children should remain with their parent/carer at all times. **School finishes at 3.20pm.**

Years 5 and 6 - Children will walk out at 3.20pm and line up either side of the path at the EYFS gate. Children who have written permission to walk home will be dismissed. Reminders for children to wear helmets if riding a bike. Teachers will dismiss children when they see a parent/carer. **School finishes at 3.20pm.**

After School Clubs and Wrap Around Care – Children will remain with their class and be taken to their after-school club at 3.25pm.

2.4 Collection Arrangements

Pupils will only be permitted to leave the premises with adults who are registered with the school as a person with collection responsibility or the parent/carer has contacted school giving them the name of who is collecting.

If parents wish for their child to be collected by another party who does not have parental responsibility, whether this is a regular occurrence or a single occurrence, **they must contact school in writing (email) BEFORE 2.30pm informing the staff member of the following:**

- **the name of the person they wish to collect their child(ren).**
- **the relationship between themselves/the child(ren) and the person they wish to collect.**
- **a physical description of the person, unless already known to the school.**

In an emergency, verbal consent may be given for an agreed person to take their child home.

Staff members who are unsure of an adult's identity will ask to see identification.

If there is uncertainty about a person's identity following the checking of their identification, the following procedure will be followed:

- A staff member will take the pupil to the school office.
- The pupil's parents will be contacted for further advice.
- A member of the SLT will be made aware of the situation.
- If the pupil's parents are not contactable, the standard procedure for uncollected pupils will be followed.

Social workers are not permitted to collect pupils from the school to attend care review meetings without the prior consent of teachers, foster carers, parents and the pupil themselves.

Pupils who have not been collected following an after-school club will follow **the late collection procedure**.

Parents are aware of what is expected of their behaviour when they are collecting pupils e.g., the school is a smoke-free zone; no dogs on the school grounds and the expectation to supervise children at all times.

Parents should ensure that once collected, children stay with them at all times. Children should not run around the car park near the parked cars. Parents should ensure that children never run ahead of them. Children should never leave the school gate without their parent/carer.

2.5 Drop off and collection by older siblings

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the child is dropped off and collected by a responsible person if it is not safe for the child to walk home unsupervised.

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. This can include in the care of an older sibling if the level of supervision is 'likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (Children and Young Persons Act, 1933).

Therefore, parents/carers must understand and be prepared to take responsibility for anything that will go wrong in their absence. They are also responsible for the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

The suitability of an older sibling (aged 16 years or above) caring for a younger child needs to be considered on a case by-case basis, by a judgment of the potential risks of this arrangement; the maturity of the child collecting/being collected; the length and nature of the journey home, the behaviour and relationship of the children collecting/being collected.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the NSPCC recommend that no one under 16 will be left to care for a younger child.

St Margaret Clitherow Policy for children to be collected by an older sibling:

- Children in the Early Years (Reception) and KS1 (Y1 and Y2) must be collected by an adult aged 16 years and over.
- Children in Key Stage 2 (Y3 to Y6) must not be collected by anyone below the age of 15.

2.6 Late Collection Procedure

Parents will notify the school at the first possible opportunity if they believe they will be late to collect their child. If the school phone is not answered, parents will send an email.

If a pupil has not been collected 10 minutes after the specified collection time, a staff member will escort them to the school office and the pupil's parent will be contacted.

If the pupil's parents cannot be reached via the contact number provided, emergency contacts will be phoned.

The school will continue to try and contact the parents.

After 3.30pm, the pupil will join the after-school club (if available) and the parents are liable to pay the cost for this service.

All staff members are aware of the school's internal procedure for late collection and will ensure that the situation is resolved whilst causing as little distress as possible to the pupil.

If the parents cannot be contacted, the non-collection procedure will be followed.

At 3.30pm, staff have other responsibilities such as CPD and planning, preparation and assessment for their lessons the next day. It is unfair to ask staff to look after children who have not been collected on time. Please be considerate and make every effort to collect children on time.

2.7 Recurrence of Late Collection

The length and frequency of late collections are monitored by the school.

Concerns regarding a pupil's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will keep a record of incidents where parents are late with no reasonable explanation using the school's electronic CPOMS system.

Parents who have been late to collect their child(ren) (after 3.30pm) on three occasions in a half term will be charged £5 for every extra half an hour per child.

2.8 Non-Collection Procedure

The school will continue to try and contact the parents and named emergency contacts in the event of a non-collection.

A detailed record of the action taken, and the calls made, will be kept using the schools electronic CPOMS system.

Under no circumstances will staff members go and look for the parents.

A staff member will supervise the pupil at all times.

If no contact has been made with the pupil's parents or emergency contacts, and no one has arrived to collect the child within an hour since the original collection time – the end of the school day or at 4.30pm if it was pre-arranged for a pupil to attend a school club – the school's child protection procedure will be followed and children's services and the police will be contacted.

A member of staff will stay with the pupil until children's services arrives.

Once the situation has been resolved, the reason the circumstances arose will be established and noted, and steps to avoid recurrence will be taken by the school and parents.

3 Walking To and From School Alone

3.1 Policy Rationale

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 in itself does not disallow independent travel. However, as a school we are responsible for the welfare of our pupils and therefore 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.

3.2 Children in Foundation Stage, Key stage 1 and Lower Key stage 2

Our agreed school policy is that no pupil in Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception); Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) or Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) should walk to or from school on his or her own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. In addition, we will only hand over pupils to named adults or older siblings provided they are 16 years old or above for EYFS and Key Stage 1 and 15 years and above for Key Stage 2 (however, if the professional judgement of the adult at school deems the older sibling not to be suitable, they will not hand the child over).

Pupils will not be handed over to other adults unless the school has been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement (see 2.4 Collection Arrangements). We also ask that you keep us informed by email of any changes in arrangements. If someone arrives to collect your child and we have not been notified, the adult will have to wait until we have verified his or her identity. If no one arrives to collect a child in these year groups, they will be kept in school and parents contacted (see 2.7 Non-Collection procedure). We will not allow older brothers or sisters in school to collect younger siblings.

3.3 Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 6 Only from September 2025)

Please note from September 2025, only Year 6 pupils will be permitted to walk home alone except for in circumstances agreed with the Headteacher.

While there is no set age when children are ready to walk home on their own, we believe that parents need to decide whether their child is ready for the responsibility of walking home from school alone when they reach Year 6.

In deciding whether a child is ready to walk home from school, parents should assess any risks associated with the route and the child's confidence. Parents should work with their children to build up their independence while walking from school through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

There are many ways that parents can prepare children to make an independent journey. Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills and prepare a child for secondary school. The best way to do this is for parents to walk with their 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.

3.4 Parent Responsibilities

Parents should teach their child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- 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 and walk straight across.
- Remember that drivers may not see them, even if they can see the vehicle.
- Remember that it is hard to judge the speed of a car so be cautious.
- Remember to wear a helmet when riding a bike.
- Never, ever, follow someone who is either a stranger or someone they know but is not a designated "safe" adult. Speak to your child about what they should do if this should ever happen.

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 either when on their own, with siblings or when with a friend?
3. Are they road safety aware?
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 did not want to do?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know whom best to approach to get help?

If you are not confident about how your child would behave 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 completing the permission slip below. Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission has been given.

We will not allow children to walk home alone in the dark. Please bear in mind that if they are attending an after-school club it may be dark when the club finishes.

Where children walk to, or walk home from school, alone, we would expect that a parent, or other responsible person, is at home when they leave or arrive.

3.5 Pupil Behaviour

Pupils are responsible for their behaviour whilst on the school premises either before or after school, and when walking to and from school alone.

As pupils of SMC 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 SMC's values and Mission.

- ✓ Respect each other: Follow the school rules when walking home. If you have nothing nice to say – say nothing at all.

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.

The behaviour of children walking to and from school alone is the parents' responsibility once children leave the school gates.

3.6 Monitoring this Policy

This Pupil Collection and Walking to and from school alone policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and St Margaret Clitherow governing body at least annually, or more frequently if needed. At each review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

SMC Pupil Collection and Walking To and From School Alone Policy

Ratified on: 31st January 2025

Review by: January 2026

Headteacher: Sarah Sweeney-McGinty

Chair of Governors: Patricia Bradley

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy



St Margaret Clitherow Academy Permission for pupils to walk to and from school unaccompanied.
Person with parental responsibility to complete and return this reply slip to school.

Name of child: Year: 6

I wish to inform you that my child will be walking to/from school on regular basis.

✓ 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 school office at the beginning of the day.

✓ I understand that the mobile phone will be the responsibility of my child at all other times.

✓ I understand that the school rules must be followed at all times on the journey to and from school.

✓ 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.

✓ I will notify you immediately should this arrangement change.

✓ I have read and understood the guidelines, systems and reasonable precautions set out in 'Pupil Collection and Walking to and from school alone Policy'.

I fully understand that once I give permission for my child to walk to and from school alone, the school is not responsible for my child's actions or whereabouts once they are not on the school premises.

Signed..... Date:

[Name print]..... Relationship to child.....