



Safe Travel Advice for Parents and Children

Children in Year 5 & 6 may travel to and from school alone, provided the parent has given written permission. We hope the following information and resources are useful if you make this choice for your child once they are in Upper Key Stage 2.

Top 10 walking home from school safety tips taken from this website: [Walking to School](#)

Purchase Bright Clothing

While a black coat might be ideal for keeping the dirt at bay, it may stop your child from being seen by traffic. Make sure that you purchase a coat that can be seen by cars at night time. Choose a bright colour and try to opt for something with reflective material. Alternatively, if your child's school uniform denotes a dark coloured coat, you can sew on reflective patches or add reflective and luminescent accessories to your child's bag.

Get Up to Scratch with Road Safety

If you've never run through road safety rules with your child, now is a good time. If you've already been teaching these, run through them with your child to make sure they understand.

Make flashcards for the different signs, like a green man, zebra crossing, pelican crossing etc. Test them on what they know and fill in the gaps of what they don't. If they're unfamiliar with anything, showing kids always works best — take them for walks around the neighbourhood to show them what to look for and how to behave.

Walk the Route Together Beforehand

To instill confidence in your child about walking to school, walk the route with them several times beforehand — use the summer holiday as a chance to do this once or twice a week. Point out landmarks, notable houses, memorable businesses, and other unforgettable features. In doing this, your child starts to know the route off by heart but also knows how to correct themselves if they're wrong.

Why not try a few different routes to see which is the quickest or easiest to remember.

Choose the Safest Route

Of course, it seems obvious to choose the safest route, but this allows you to monitor your child's road awareness too. Having walked the different routes together, talk with your child about which course they perceive to be the safest. Run through the different tasks they'll have to complete on each route, such as crossing busy roads or finding a zebra crossing.

Try to pick the walkway with the least number of busy crossings. Try to look for crossings that have traffic lights and opt for streets with fewer cars. Seek out roads with streetlights and ensure that your child isn't using pathways with low lighting or few by-passers.

Have an Alternate Route Planned

If your child does get into trouble for any reason, or can't follow their regular route, you need to have a backup in mind. Make sure your child knows the alternative walk home as well as they know their primary route. You don't want them to get confused if they're already having the stress of taking a detour. Make sure you set up a system where they alert you if they have to take the other route.

Brief them on Stranger Danger

As we've become quite an empathetic society, people often talk to children in the street. As pleasant as this is, it can be confusing for young children who aren't so savvy on which adults to trust. Talk through different scenarios with your children and give them safeguarding measures if they feel unsafe around another adult — never go with a stranger, call if they are worried, go back to school to find an adult etc.

Make Sure They Have a Working Mobile Phone

The mobile phone debate goes back and forth, but having a phone certainly gives you a point of contact for your child. It also means they can call you or the police if they feel threatened. If you choose to give your child a mobile phone, give firm instructions on usage as not to run up the phone bill. Explain that it is their responsibility to keep it charged and to notify you if they need topping up.

Install all emergency phone numbers into the device and put them on speed dial just in case your child needs help in a hurry. Run through the procedure of dialing 999 for a real emergency.

Identify Safe Spots

If your child gets in trouble on their way home or they are having difficulty contacting you, they may need a safe place to go to ask for help. On the way home, make sure you point out some safe places that your child can seek help — this relieves them from having to ask a stranger. Try speaking to your local newsagent, cafe, coffee shop etc. They will no doubt be happy to help your child if they're in a fluster.

Enforce a Strict No Headphone Rule

Listening to music and walking can be quite meditative, which is exactly the reason it's a bad idea for children. Road safety demands a good working order of all senses and for children to stay alert. If they're listening to music or podcasts on headphones, they won't be able to hear oncoming traffic, which can be extremely dangerous.

Buddy Systems and Walking Buses

There is indeed safety in numbers. Having children walk together helps them to remember the directions more clearly. Find neighbours who also have children walking to the same school.

Safe Routes to School

Allowing your child to go to school on foot can be a real privilege, fostering independence and trustworthiness. However, if you want your child to walk to school safely, you'll need to not only ensure they know road safety rules, you'll want to pick a route that sets them up for success.

Identifying safe routes to school can be tricky. Luckily schools are often hot on walking to school safety and can give you local information on streets to avoid when planning your route. If you're planning a course to go to school on foot, consider these points:

- Use residential streets with less traffic
- Find roads with low speed limits
- Avoid alleyways
- Avoid unlit areas
- Use routes with lots of shops and landmarks
- Use well-populated areas
- Avoid routes with scary dogs
- Try to design a route past other parents' houses
- Choose less busy crossings with lights and signals
- Choose roads with bus stops in case children need to leave quickly
- Avoid roads without pavements

Other sources of information on safe travel can be found on the following websites:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/rules-of-travel-for-under-18s>

<https://stars.tfl.gov.uk/saferjourneyplanner>

<https://www.roadwise.co.uk/schools/using-the-road/green-cross-code/>