GALLEYWALL PRIMARY
CITY OF LONDON ACADEMY

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Bermondsey, London www.galleywall.co.uk

Independent Travel and Pupil Mobile Phones in School Policy and Guidance

Last reviewed: Aug 26 RHU
Ratified by Governors: Sep 26
Next review: Aug 28

Section 1: Introduction

A Rationale

i This policy is about safeguarding pupils walking to and from school independently and pupil mobile phones in school

ii 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.

iii We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk. Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children get to school and attend regularly, but this in itself does not disallow independent travel.

iv 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 judgment for parents to decide when children can play out on their own, walk to the shops or school."

v These rules apply to Galleywall pupils travelling independently to school or home (or to another specified location) after school.

vi We require your permission to dismiss your child from school without an adult (so they can walk home from school unaccompanied) and in addition we need to decide it is safe.

Section 2: Policy

A Pupils in Foundation Stage, KS1 (Years 1 - 2) and KS2 (Years 3 - 5)

i No pupil in Reception – Year 4 (and it will be very rare in Year 5) should walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school.

ii We will only hand over pupils to named adults. Occasionally we may grant permission for an older child to bring or collect Galleywall pupils (see *Information for Parents* section 2 B iii or 2 C iv).

iii No Galleywall pupils may act as the responsible adult for this purpose as they are not old enough, even if they are siblings.

B Pupils in Year 6

i There is no age in law when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence.

ii In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to and from school unaccompanied, 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 and from school together using route finding, road safety skills and general awareness.

iii The school has decided that Year 6 is the youngest age a child should travel unaccompanied. Occasionally this is extended to Year 5.

iv Once these permissions are given, we will no longer be responsible for ensuring that your child is with an adult at the end of the school day. You will then be responsible for ensuring your child's safety during travel from school and when they arrive home.

C Walking to and from school unaccompanied

i We will also ask you to confirm the route they will be taking and agree to our expectations regarding pupils' use of mobile phones. You are responsible for ensuring your child's safety on their journey to school.

ii If they are walking TO school, pupils should arrive at school between 08:45 and 08:50 and go straight into the building.

iii If they are walking FROM school, we will dismiss your child on their own or in a group of other pupils at the end of school.

iv If we perceive dangers in the local community at the time of dismissal, we may hold pupils in school rather than dismiss them, and we will contact parents immediately.

v These permissions are for walking, as this is safest means of transport. Pupils may travel by scooter without further permission. If you wish them to travel by bicycle or bus, this should be clear when requesting permission and we may need further discussion with you.

vi If your child is ill or we phone you to collect for another reason, this needs to be done in person and we will not send the child home unaccompanied even if they have permission.

D Permission

i Parents grant their side of the permission by completing the form here.

ii 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?

iii 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.

iv The school will consider the application and respond with its permission. This will be an individual decision for each child.

v Only after both of these stages are complete is permission granted.

vi Your child will be prevented from walking home unless this permission process has been completed in writing.

E Withdrawal of permission

i Parents may withdraw this permission in writing at any time.

ii If we have serious concerns about safety or behaviour, on the journey or in school, we may withdraw the permission and ask for you to start accompanying them again.

F Preparing your child to travel unaccompanied

i There are lots of ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. 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.

ii Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills.

iii 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 find their way on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

iv Teach your child to:

- Pay attention to traffic at all times when crossing the street; never become distracted.
- Always cross at the intersection where there are traffic lights; do not cross in the middle of the road. Alternatively, cross in a place where you can see clearly in all directions. Avoid crossing behind parked cars or on 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).

G Absences

i You may have told us that your child will travel to school unaccompanied. Please note that while we do not normally contact parents to advise that children have

arrived safely at school, we will contact you if your child has **not** arrived, in line with our usual absence practice.

H Punctuality

i The privilege of walking to and from school independently is dependent on pupils demonstrating responsibility and maintaining consistent punctuality. If a pupil is late to school on multiple occasions while walking independently, their permission to walk to and from school independently will be withdrawn. Once they have arrived at school on time for six consecutive weeks, permission will be reinstated.

I Children with SEN

i Deciding whether a child with special educational needs should walk to and from school alone will be on a case-by-case basis, as it is for all pupils. Parents should discuss with the SENCo in the first instance.

J Mobile phones

i There are benefits to your child traveling with a mobile phone in terms of communication, security and maybe tracking.

ii There are also dangers of carrying something so valuable; if your child has a valuable smartphone, this can be attractive to others and there have been a number of muggings in the local area. Carrying valuable items could make your child more vulnerable, so this will be your choice. We would recommend that if you are providing your child with a phone, it is a very basic model that can only be used to text and call. You also need to ensure you have spoken to them about how to keep it safe and what to do should they be approached by someone who wants it.

iii Once in school, your child will not be allowed to keep hold of their phone. Before they have entered the premises, mobile phones must be turned off. When they arrive in the classroom, mobile phones will be handed to their class teacher and placed into a locked drawer or room until dismissal. It is the child's responsibility to collect the phone at the end of the day, not the job of the class teacher to remind them.

iv Please note that if a child fails to hand in the phone on arrival, they will be given one warning. The 2nd time they fail to hand in their phone, the phone will be taken away and only returned to a parent/family member.

v If your child needs to call you at the beginning or end of the day to communicate with you about travelling to or from school, they should ask a teacher for their permission, and will be supervised during the call. Under no circumstances should your child use their phone in school to take photos or videos. If they are caught doing this, the phone will be taken away and only returned to a parent/family member. In this instance, we ask for your support to ensure that any photos or videos are deleted from the phone.

vi We encourage parents to regularly check messages and apps on their child's phone to keep their child safe and ensure they are using their phone responsibly.