Drop Off/Collection of Children Policy

Date of last review:	September 2026	Date of next review:	September 2027
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‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full’

(John 10:10)

Supervision on the School Grounds before the school day starts

Children **must** be supervised on their playground by an adult every morning until the doors open at 8.35am. If you are unable to remain with your child, please ensure they are in the care of another responsible person, for example a family member or friend. This is to ensure your child remains safe whilst on the school premises.

Children remain the responsibility of their parents until the doors open at 8.35am. Children from Year R – Year 5 **should not** be left unaccompanied before this time. Children in Year 6, who have had permission from their parent(s) to walk to school unaccompanied are allowed to wait in the playground until their classroom door is opened at 8:35am. Parents of children in Year 6 must have signed the agreement which allows their child to walk home independently; any child who does not have signed permission must be collected by an appropriate person.

During the school day

All children are supervised when on the playground by teachers and teaching assistants for morning break and by the mid-day meal supervisors during lunchtime service. At no time are the children left unsupervised outside. School playgrounds are fenced, segregating the children from the school car parks and main entrance.

Leaving School at the End of the Day

At the end of the school day all children leave by the appropriate door. Children in Year R – Year 2 will be collected directly from their classes. Year 3 – Year 6 children will be released to their parents or known adult in their playground. Parents are asked to collect their children from inside the school gate as there is a busy road outside the main entrance.

All children know that, if the adult who should be collecting them has not arrived, they are to stay with their teacher. If after 10 minutes, no one has arrived the teacher will take the child to the office and the person on late duty will telephone to see what the delay might be. The child stays in school until an adult arrives. No child is allowed to leave unless we are sure they are safe. If no contact has been established with the parent/carer after 1 hour after the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures, for example a safeguarding referral to Children’s Services will be made.

The school expects that parents are punctual when dropping off and collecting their children to and from school. The school staff are responsible for the children during school opening hours, but they have other commitments once their teaching day has finished.

Emergency and planned changes the adult collecting your child

If there has been an emergency and you are going to be late collecting your child at the end of the school day, please inform the office of this as soon as possible. If someone different to those named as main contacts are collecting your child, for example another parent or family friend, please inform the office as soon as possible in writing (office@st-johns-gravesend.kcsp.org.uk) This is to ensure your child is dismissed to the adult you have sent to school in a timely manner. Children will not be released to parents or other adults without prior consent which may cause undue distress to your children.

Leaving School during the Day

The school office and class teacher should be informed if a child needs to leave school during the day, for example for a medical appointment. No child is allowed out of school during the day for an appointment unless a known adult arrives to collect him or her. Parents need to report to the School Office and sign the child out using the signing out app. A copy of any medical appointment letters will be asked for prior to an absence being permitted for medical reasons.

Independent Travel to/from School Agreement

There is no set legal age that children can walk to and from school independently or be left on their own. It is an offence, however, to leave a child alone if it places them at risk and therefore the school has a continual obligation to alert relevant authorities if we believe this is the case. The NSPCC advise the following:

- Children under 8 should not be outdoors for a considerable length of time unaccompanied.
- Children under the age of 12 should not be home alone for more than a very short period of time.

The school therefore permits Year 6 children to walk home unaccompanied, only if the school receives written consent from parents. These children may not be responsible for the collection of any younger siblings.

If parents choose to let their Year 6 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 children to build up their independence, while walking to and from school together, through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. The most important factor to consider about the suitability of a child walking to/from school alone is any risk to the child. Good practice would be to have a discussion between the school and the parent, and to identify alternative options, if necessary, e.g., another parent taking the child home. Ultimately the responsibility for a child's safety rests with the parent.

Drop Off and Collection by Older Siblings

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the 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. 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 the care and safety of their eldest child, even while that child is acting in a caring role for younger siblings.

It is therefore best practice and the school's policy that Year 1 – Year 5 children must be dropped off and collected by a responsible person aged 14 or over. No child in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) may be collected by anyone younger than 16.

If the school has any concerns about the person collecting a child, or there are concerns about any child's safety or welfare due to these arrangements, this must be raised with the parent (ideally in advance of the collection) and if alternative arrangements are not made, a safeguarding referral made to Children's Services where necessary.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The same procedures for drop off and collection can be applied to extended school activities, where the activity is provided by the school. Children in Year 6 must be collected by an adult if attending an evening activity. Any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL, who will decide on the appropriate response in conjunction with the Headteacher.

Where the activity is provided by an external organisation or provider, it is the responsibility of that organisation to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, including those arising from drop off and collection issues. The school governing body should ensure that as part of the service level agreement, the organisation has confirmed that:

- Level one safeguarding children training has been completed by staff.
- A child protection policy is in place.
- An appropriately trained designated member of staff is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns.