



This document covers the clubs position on children walking to and from the rugby club alone.

# Policy on Safeguarding children walking to and from Rugby alone

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Breading, Alex (A.P.)

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There are no laws around age or distance of walking to school.

"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. We at CIRUFC are not a school, but we are responsible for the welfare of our children and therefore have to consider what we believe is good practice in ensuring the safety of our children.

We also have an obligation to alert relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

Our policy is as follows:

No child in (Year 1 & Year 2)

Should walk to or from rugby on their own or be left on their own on the premises either before or after rugby.

In addition we will only hand over children to named adults or older siblings provided they are 14 years old or above.

Children will not be handed over to other adults unless the club coaches have been informed by the parent that they have made this arrangement. We also ask that you keep us informed of any changes in arrangements. If no one turns up to collect a child in these groups they will be kept at the club and parents contacted.

Children in (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

There is no set age when children are ready to walk to school or home on their own. It very much depends upon their maturity and confidence. Therefore as regards children in this age group we believe that you as parents need to decide whether your child is ready for this responsibility.

We would still highly recommend that pupils in year 3 and 4 at least are still brought to and collected from rugby.

In deciding whether your child is ready to walk to rugby 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 rugby through route finding, road safety skills and general awareness. There are lots of ways you can prepare your child to make an independent journey. Children who are driven do not have the opportunity to develop road awareness and are therefore more vulnerable when they start to walk independently. Walking to school is a great opportunity to learn road safety skills. 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 way finding on their own, in preparation for walking with friends or alone when they are older.

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 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 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 to go with him or tries to physically get close to him, and 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.

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 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 didn't want to do (scream, shout, kick or fight)?
7. Would they know what to do if they needed help?
8. Would they know who best to approach to get help?

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.

Your child will also be responsible for their behaviour whilst on the club premises either before or after rugby. Should their behaviour not be acceptable you will be asked to accompany or collect them until they have proved they can be trusted again.

We understand that parents may wish to allow their child in Years 4, 5 and 6 to walk home from rugby unaccompanied, with the informed decision that THEY are responsible for their child's safety on their way to and from the club, even when they are not physically present.

As you will appreciate, the safety of the children is our main concern. Thanks for reading

The Canvey Island Rugby Union Football Club Committee