

Accessible Education Provision for Neurodivergent Children
through graduated interventions and academic support.



*An organisation that aims to improve every child's life
by being closer to nature,
providing equality in learning
and promoting well-being*

**WALKING/RIDING TO AND HOME
FROM FOREST SCHOOL
POLICY FOR RAW LEARNING**

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1. Introduction

There are no laws around the age of a child when walking or riding to school or of the distance from the 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/ride to the shops or school."* Parents are legally obliged to ensure that their children get to school and that they attend regularly, but this does not prevent their children from travelling independently to school.

At Raw Learning, we are responsible for the welfare of our learners and therefore we have to consider what we believe is good practice for the safety of our learners. We also have an obligation to alert the relevant authorities should we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy will set out the responsibilities of both Raw Learning and parents/carers to ensure the safety of their children attending Forest School when walking or riding a bicycle independently to or from our setting. It will also cover points to consider when a parent/carer is thinking of allowing their child to travel independently to or from our setting.

3. Responsibilities of Raw Learning and Parents/Carers

It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that their child arrives safely and promptly to Raw Learning for their session/s. It is advised that parents/carers ensure that their child is fully conversant with road safety, and that they have assessed the risks of the route to the setting, before a parent/carer deems their child is responsible and road safety aware enough to walk/ride to the setting unaccompanied. Crossing busy main roads and walking through secluded areas is discouraged.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to assess the route by which the child will walk/ride home to ensure that they are confident that their child does have the ability to walk/ride home safely, even if their child is accompanied to school by a parent/carer.

Should they wish to allow them to do so, they are asked to inform Raw Learning of this decision. A walking/riding a bike Consent Form **must** be completed.

It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that Raw Learning is informed if their child is unable to attend their session for any reason. The parent/carer **must** inform us that their child will be absent either by contacting the Forest School Leader directly, or emailing info@rawlearning.co.uk who will then pass on the absence to the Forest School Leader. This is particularly important when their child usually walks or rides to the setting unaccompanied as the Facilitators will have no way of knowing if the child has met with an accident if they do not arrive.

If a child is found to be absent and no prior notice of such an absence has been received from the child's parent/carer, Raw Learning recognises a clear responsibility to contact the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for the absence or to highlight that the child has not attended. If it is confirmed that a child has left home with the intention of walking/riding to Raw Learning but has not arrived, and therefore the issue of a missing child is noted,

the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be immediately informed and safeguarding procedures for child protection/missing children's procedures will be followed.

If a child has left the setting to walk/ride home, but does not arrive home when expected, and direct contact with the child has not been established, the parent/carer should contact Raw Learning in the first instance to seek clarification from the Facilitator who dismissed their child as to the time they left Raw Learning. However, Raw Learning may not be contactable after home time and therefore it will be the parents/carers responsibility to notify the police.

Parents/carers need to be aware that when their child walks or rides home from Forest School, Raw Learning will not know if the child arrives home as planned. Therefore, the parent/carer need to ensure that adequate safety protocols are in place should an emergency/accident arise.

4. Points to consider when allowing a child to travel to Raw Learning unaccompanied

Allowing a child to walk or ride a bicycle to Raw Learning unaccompanied can be a real privilege, fostering independence and trustworthiness. However, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to assess the route on which the child will walk or ride home from Raw Learning to ensure that they are confident that their child has the ability to walk/ride home safely.

Safe Routes

Identifying safe routes to the setting can be tricky. When planning a course to get to Raw Learning on foot or by bicycle, parents/carers should consider the following 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 area
- 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 in general

When parents/carers rate the 'suitability' of the route the child will take to the setting, we suggest considering traffic flow, the presence of adequate footways, visibility and the opportunities for crossing the road.

Alternative Routes

Parents/carers need to have a backup in mind in case their child does get into trouble for any reason or can't follow their regular route. They should ensure that their child knows the alternative route to walk/ride home as well as they know their primary route. We do not want

children to get confused if they are already having the stress of taking a detour.

Parents/carers should set up a system whereby their child can alert them if they need to take the alternative route home.

Other Safety Advice for walking/riding to/from the setting

CLOTHING: While a black coat might be ideal for keeping the dirt at bay, it may stop a child from being seen by traffic, so always try to purchase bright clothing and opt for something with a reflective material where possible as this will make your child more visible to traffic when it is dark.

ROAD SAFETY: Parents/carers should ensure that they run through road safety rules with their child regularly and ensure that their child understands them.

WALK/RIDE THE ROUTE TOGETHER BEFOREHAND: To instil confidence in their child to walk/ ride to the setting independently, parents/carers are encouraged to walk/ride the route with them several times beforehand. By doing this, the child will start to know the route off by heart but will also know how to correct themselves if they are wrong.

STRANGER DANGER: Parents/carers should ensure that their child knows what to do if they are approached by another adult, even if that person is someone they know, and particularly if that person makes them feel unsafe. Safeguarding measures should be discussed with the child to keep them safe:

- Never go with a stranger
- Call out if they are worried – shouting “FIRE” attracts attention quickly
- Go back to Raw Learning if they are worried

MOBILE PHONE: Having a mobile phone gives a child a point of contact with their parent/carer and means that they can call them, or the police, if they feel threatened. Parents/carers should make sure that their child is given firm instructions on using the phone, and should also ensure that:

- Emergency phone numbers are installed onto the device and are on speed dial to use in case of an emergency
- The phone is kept fully charged and topped up, and that their child knows it is their responsibility to let them know when this is needed
- They run through the procedure of dialling 999 for a real emergency
- Their child is aware of the danger of walking along with their mobile in their hand

SAFE SPOTS: If a child gets in trouble on their way home or they are having difficulty contacting their parent/carer, they may need a safe place to go to ask for help. Parents/carers should point out some safe places that their child can seek help on their way home as this relieves them from having to ask a stranger. Parents/cares could speak to the local newsagent,

café/coffee shop, etc. to ask them if they would be able to help if the child is flustered or scared, and let their child know where these safe spots are.

HEADPHONES: Parents/carers should enforce a strict No Headphones rule. Listening to music and walking can be quite meditative, but this is the reason why it is a bad idea for children. Road safety demands a good working order of all the senses for children to stay alert. If they are listening to music or podcasts on headphones, they won't be able to hear oncoming traffic which can be extremely dangerous.

This policy was adopted by	Raw Learning
On	2 nd August 2024
Date to be reviewed	2 nd August 2025
Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>Rachel King</i>
Name of signatory	Rachel King
Role of signatory	Director