

# Independent Travel Policy

*(Emma's Explorers Out-of-School Service)*

## Policy Statement

At Emma's Explorers, we recognise that as children grow and become more confident, they may wish to begin making short journeys independently — for example, to and from school, a club or activity, or to and from our childcare setting. We believe it is important to support children in developing independence and responsibility, while ensuring their safety and wellbeing remain our priority.

This policy outlines how we manage independent travel arrangements, in line with our **Care Inspectorate registration, insurance conditions**, and our duty of care to children and families.

## Eligibility

- Only children aged **eight years or older** may travel independently to or from Emma's Explorers.
- No child under the age of eight will be permitted to travel unaccompanied, in line with our registration and insurance requirements.
- Independent travel is only permitted where a **completed and signed Independent Travel Permission Form** has been provided by a parent or principal carer.

## Parental Responsibility

- Parents/carers must carefully consider their child's **age, maturity, confidence, and ability** to travel safely before giving consent.
- Parents are responsible for discussing and reinforcing **road safety, stranger awareness, and safe routes** with their child.
- Emma's Explorers **cannot accept responsibility for a child's safety** before they arrive at the setting, or once they have left our care. Independent travel is **not covered by our insurance**.

## Procedures

### Arrivals

- Children travelling independently must arrive at Emma's Explorers by the expected time noted on their permission form.
- Staff will register their arrival in the same way as all other children.
- If a child does not arrive as expected:
  - Staff will contact the parent/carers immediately.
  - If the parent/carers cannot be reached, staff will contact the school/start point or the child's emergency contacts.
  - Usual safeguarding procedures will be followed if the child cannot be located.

EEOSS date – 08/2025

Review date – 08/2026

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## Departures

- Children with parental consent will be signed out on the register when leaving independently.
- Once a child leaves our setting, responsibility transfers fully to the parent/carer.
- Emma's Explorers cannot accept responsibility for a child's safety once they are outside of staff supervision.

## Consent & Records

- Parents/carers must complete an **Independent Travel Permission Form** before any arrangements begin.
- The form must specify:
  - The days independent travel is permitted
  - The start and end points of the journey
  - The expected time of arrival
  - Any special arrangements (e.g. walking with a sibling, travelling with a friend, cycling, etc.)
- Parents must notify Emma's Explorers immediately if there are any changes to their child's travel arrangements.

## Safeguarding

- No child will be allowed to travel independently without written parental consent.
- Any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing during independent travel will be managed in line with our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.
- Staff will ensure that independent travel arrangements are respected but also reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes in Care Inspectorate guidance, insurance conditions, or best practice require it.

EEOSS date – 08/2025

Review date – 08/2026