

**Safeguarding for Children and Young People:**

**Walking Home Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines in place to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people leaving GCAT Youth Group activities and events to travel home by themselves. It is important to note that while GCAT prioritises the safety of our activity attendees at all times, we cannot be held responsible or liable for any incidents or accidents that may occur before or after they have left activity premises.

**Policy**

**GCAT will not allow children aged 9 or under to travel home on their own after events** – they must be collected by an authorised person.

**GCAT will not allow primary-aged children to leave youth group events early** – they must stay for the duration or be collected.

**GCAT will not allow young people aged 15 or under to travel home on their own after 10pm** – they will be delivered to home or must be collected by an authorised person.

Outside of these parameters, GCAT acknowledges that in the Glenkens-context, children and young people are confident and able to travel home safely from local activities and supports the wishes of parents and carers to allow them to do so.

**Procedures**

**1. Permission Slip Requirement:**

   a. Parents or carers must complete a permission slip before their child or young person (aged 10 - 18) will be allowed to leave any youth group activity and travel home unaccompanied. Permission slips will be issued termly for regular groups / activities.

   b. The permission slip must be completed with relevant contact details and any specific instructions or concerns regarding the young person’s safety or wellbeing.

c. A permission slip remains valid for all Youth Group activities (CatStrand Young Creatives or Glenkens Youth Group) for one term and the following holiday period, unless rescinded by parents or carers before then.

**2. No Permission Slip:**

   a. If a child or young person does not have a completed permission slip on record with the Youth Group Deliverer, they will not be allowed to leave the Youth Group unaccompanied.

   b. In such cases, parents or carers will be contacted to arrange for the young person to be collected by an authorised adult or to give one-off verbal permission.

**3. Communication and Cooperation:**

   a. GCAT Youth Group Deliverers will maintain open lines of communication with parents or carers to ensure they are aware of the departure times and expected arrival at home.

   b. Parents or carers are encouraged to inform the Youth Group Deliverer if they are unable to collect them on time and to let them know of the new plan.

 c. Young people attending will be made aware of this policy and the reason for it. Non-cooperation (such as leaving when they have been asked not to / not signing in and out) may result in exclusion from the Youth Group going forward.

**4. Walk Home Safety:**

   a. Before leaving the Youth Group, young people will be encouraged to walk home in groups whenever possible, to follow safe walking routes, to adhere to road safety requirements and not to accept lifts from strangers. Younger children (10+) will also be asked if they know their address and how they are going to get there.

   b. Children and young people will be advised to seek help from a trusted adult if they feel unsafe or encounter any problems on their way home.

 c. It is recommended that children and young people carry a fully charged mobile phone when walking home to ensure they can communicate with their parents and carers in case of emergencies.

**However, it remains the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure that the child is confident and able to return home safely.**

**6. Liability Statement:**

   a. GCAT Youth Groups do not accept any responsibility or liability for children and young people once they have left the activity premises.

   b. Parents or carers will acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of this policy by signing the termly permission slip (below). Reply to the email containing this document with the relevant information can be taken as electronic signature if required.
 **By implementing this safeguarding policy, we aim to maximise the safety and well-being of children and young people leaving our youth groups while ensuring clear communication of responsibilities with parents or carers.**

**Additional note – collection by unauthorised people.**

1. In order to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy, GCAT Youth Groups will work on the assumption that children and young people can be collected by any adult who names them. **If there are people that cannot legally be allowed to collect children, it is parents / carers responsibility to let the Youth Group Deliverer know of these circumstances** (in full confidence).
2. (Note that Youth Group Deliverers will not intervene in private disputes between parents / carers; they can only help to enforce legal orders).

**Additional note – leaving Youth Group activities early.**

1. At informal / drop-in events, young people (secondary school age and over) will be asked to sign in and out of the events so that Deliverers have an accurate record of who is present.
2. Primary-aged children will not be allowed to leave events early.

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**GCAT Youth Groups – Walking Home Permission Slip**

Parent / Carer Name …………………………..

Mobile:……………………………… Email address:……………………

I give my permission for ………………………………………………………………… to walk home and / or leave events early after CatStrand Young Creatives / Glenkens Youth Group activities (delete as applicable).

I have read and understand the attached ‘Walking Home’ policy and agree to the terms.

Signature……………………………………… Date……………………

**Please add any additional information relevant to your child and this policy overpage.**

For office use only: Slip valid until (end of holiday period after relevant term): ………………