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Kid's Page

Dear Vany

Junior Reporter Vanessa “Vany” Masterson answers her latest set of questions from *Palisadian-Post* readers. If you have a question you would like to send to Vany, email it to mypost@palipost.com.

Dear Vany,

My family is going to an amusement park. I'm scared to go on the big roller coasters, should I force myself to go?

—Anonymous in 6th Grade



Dear Vany,

What's the right age to walk home by yourself?

—Anonymous in 5th Grade

Dear Anonymous in 6th Grade,

From a fellow roller coaster hater, don't force yourself to do something you don't want to do! There are so many rides at amusement parks and so many other opportunities for fun, that I would just recommend going on those. Especially if a roller coaster is going to make you sick. If your family is telling you that you're being weak or scared when you tell them you don't want to go, don't listen to them and hold your clear boundary that roller coasters aren't for you. If you want to challenge and face this fear, just know that hundreds of people go on those rides everyday, and if they were dangerous the park would've taken them down by now. Sometimes things that are scary can be really fun! My advice is to trust your gut and do what feels best for you. And remember, if you don't go now, that rollercoaster isn't going anywhere so you can go back when you feel ready!

Thank you for writing and I hope you have a great time!

—Vany

Dear Anonymous in 5th Grade,

Good question. Personally, because my house is close to my elementary school, I started walking home on my own at the age of 10. Fortunately, the community we live in is very safe, so I (and my parents) felt comfortable with me walking home “alone” in fifth grade. The reason I say “alone” is because I would actually be walking with a friend; to me alone means without a parent, so usually I'd be with one to three friends, and no adults. Going totally on your own is a different story, because you always have to watch out for your safety.

Before making a decision on what's right for you, ask yourself these questions:

How close is your house in relation to your school? Would you have to cross any very busy streets? Would it be dark out by the time you got home?

Do you feel ready? Do you trust yourself to be responsible and take care of yourself as you walked alone? Do your parents think you're ready? Do they think you will stay safe?

How old are you? Some schools actually have rules regarding walking.

Does your school let your grade walk home alone, or must there be a parent or guardian with you at pickup? I think the best age to be fully alone walking home is 11 to 12.

As a seventh grader, my family and I now feel fully comfortable with me going home alone, but that wasn't the case in 4th and 5th grade. These are just some things to consider, either way, safety first!

Thank you for writing!

—Vany