

Walking School Bus



Walking school buses are an excellent way to get kids walking to school safely.

Kids have fun walking with friends, and benefit from regular exercise and opportunities to practice pedestrian safety skills. You can help them do both while going to school!

What's a walking school bus?

We're all familiar with how school buses work. Walking school buses operate much the same way. Adults "drive" the walking school bus along a defined route, picking up kids at "stops" on the way. A walking school bus is convenient for busy parents, who can't always walk with their children, and helps address safety concerns.

How do I set up a walking school bus?

Decide what kind of walking school bus fits your community

Walking school buses can be simple or elaborate. Some examples:

- Families in a neighborhood agree to walk to school together once a week.
- Adult walk leaders pick up children at designated group meeting spots on a route to school.
- Families meet at a designated location and walk together to school.
- Trained adult volunteers stop at each participating child's home on a planned route to school.
- Adults "relay" the walking bus along its route. Each leads the children over a portion, then hands off to other adults.

Pick a safe route

- Choose routes with sidewalks or well-established paths.
- Minimize street crossings. Avoid busy, high-speed or multi lane roads.
- Notice how motorists behave, such as whether they yield for walkers or drive at safe speeds, and guide the walking school bus accordingly.
- Avoid routes with potential problems like loose dogs, bad lighting, vacant buildings, or criminal activity.

Provide adequate adult supervision

The Centers for Disease Control recommends:

- One adult per 3 children ages 4 to 6;
- One adult per 6 children ages 7-9; and
- Fewer adults for children 10 and up.



A walking school bus en route to Clairmont Elementary School in Decatur on Walk to School Day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see the National Center for Safe Routes to School's Walking School bus Guide : http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/walking_school_bus/pdf/wsb_guide.pdf

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Decide how often it will run

- Walking school buses can run every day, once a week, once a month, or just a few times each school year.

Regularly review pedestrian safety skills with students and adults. Remind everyone to:

- Always look for cars. Drivers aren't always aware of pedestrians.
- Walk along the street safely. Use sidewalks or paths; otherwise, walk facing traffic.
- Obey traffic signs and signals, especially for pedestrians.
- At intersections, look left, right and left and then behind you and in front of you for turning cars. And walk, don't run, across the street.

Make it fun

- Encourage children to name their bus.
- Have a theme day. This might include wearing clothing in support of a sports team, holding a "sneaker" day, or all walkers wearing the same color.
- Make being part of a walking school bus special by providing children with a "book bag tag" or other emblem.

Keep it going

- Keep track of participation and publicize program successes. Children and adults want to be a part of programs that make them feel good about themselves.
- Reward students with small prizes for miles or days walked and recognize them in school assemblies and announcements.
- Thank volunteers with small gifts, letters from students, or recognition in school communications.
- Cultivate new bus drivers. This is important, because walking school bus leaders are often parents, and parents typically move on when their children attend new schools.



Arcadio Elementary School, Lilburn, GA

Things to consider when setting up your walking school bus:

- Amount of time available to coordinate the program.
- Level of interest among students and parents.
- Number of adult volunteers available.
- Desired impact, such as whether the goal is to reach a neighborhood or an entire school.
- Funds available for promotional materials, safety materials, incentives and thank you gifts.

The information in this document was adapted from the National Center for Safe Routes to School's Walking School Bus Guide.



Find flyer templates, banners, and other downloads at: <http://saferoutesga.org/resources/downloads>
Learn more at www.walktoschool.org and www.saferoutesga.org

