



# How to Start a Walking School Bus at Your School

- ➔ Walking School Buses help students get together as a group which builds community, increases safety and is fun for the kids.
- ➔ Walking to school is a great way to promote a healthy, active lifestyle. Students learn responsibility, good decision making, community awareness and traffic safety, while reducing traffic and pollution at your school.

## Follow these simple steps to make your walking school bus successful:

1

### GET ORGANIZED

Your Walking School Bus should best fit with your school's schedule and capacity. Be sure to seek your principal's permission and input. Determine the frequency and choose a launch date. Working backwards from the launch date, build a schedule to include route planning, team meetings and promotion.

2

### DEFINE YOUR ROUTE

Your route should be as direct as possible, minimize street crossings and take advantage of crossing guards when possible.

Hint: Seek input from school leaders and city staff that are familiar with your area.

3

### RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers provide valuable input, build support and help with promotion. Be sure to incorporate any parent/student leadership groups on campus.

Hint: Getting volunteers involved also helps build sustainability.

4

### PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

Use everything at your disposal: fliers, posters, banners, school newsletters, all-calls intercom announcements and social media channels. Encourage the students to create banners, fliers and signs to place around school or carry with them. For extra fun, host a sign-making party for the kids to carry.

Hint: Be your biggest fan. Students, volunteers and other parents will feed off your energy and enthusiasm.

5

### TRAIN YOUR TEAM

At least one week from launch, gather your volunteers to review the route and safety protocols. Hand out safety vests (if available) and exchange contact information. Be sure everyone is on the same page and has addressed any concerns, especially timing and emergencies. Be sure to follow your school's volunteer process and best practices.

Hint: This is a good time to also include your local law enforcement agency and school officials.

6

### START WALKING

A few days before, check in with your volunteers to make sure everything is ready. The day before, make an intercom announcement to remind students to walk to school and one last e-mail to parents.

Hint: Don't panic. Whether you get 5 students or 500, you're on the right track.

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### CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS

Gather your volunteers for a debriefing and make adjustments. Be sure to thank them for their support.

Hint: Don't forget to document with pictures and video.

