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WALKING BUS



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The Walking Bus

What is a Walking Bus?

A walking bus is a safe, fun and healthy way to travel to and from school. It is organised and run by the school's community and are generally supported by your local council.

A walking bus is simply a group of school children walking to and/or from school with parents or volunteers, one acting as the 'driver' who leads the way, and one at the rear, the 'conductor'.

They meet at a safe point and walk along a set route to the school. They can also stop at 'bus stops' en route to collect pupils on the way to school and drop them off on the way home.

Benefits:

- Children arrive at school awake, alert and ready for the day ahead.
- Walking is a healthy form of exercise and helps keep children fit.
- The walking bus allows children to socialise and have fun on the way to school.
- Walking builds up children's pedestrian skills and road safety awareness. It makes them better prepared for coping with traffic.
- A walking bus can help reduce traffic congestion around the school.
- Walking is better for the environment: less cars means less pollution.
- The walking bus saves time for parents.



Setting up a Walking Bus

Preparation

Parents and the school need to be committed to the idea of a walking bus. Most of the work involved in setting up a walking bus will be done by the school and the volunteers, but full support should be given by your local council. Please contact your local council to verify this.

You should arrange a meeting to discuss setting up the scheme. Those attending the meeting can include teachers, parents, governors, the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator or anyone who has expressed an interest in helping out with the walking bus. If your school has or is developing a School Travel Plan, then this same group could set up the walking bus.

One person will volunteer to take on the role of Walking Bus Co-ordinator.

Parental interest and support

Support from parents is vital if the bus is going to succeed.

1. Send a letter out to parents asking if their children will walk with the bus and whether they themselves would like to volunteer to become involved in the walking bus.
2. Decide if there is enough interest in the scheme.
3. Hold a walking bus meeting with potential volunteers and the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator.
4. Use a large-scale map to decide on a potential route for the bus. Routes will depend on where the majority of pupils who are willing to use the bus live.

For the walking bus to be successful there must be sufficient adults to cover each journey the bus makes.



Number of adults needed

There should be a minimum of 2 adults supervising the bus. One to be the 'driver', leading from the front, the other to be the 'conductor', following at the rear. This is so all children can be seen and kept under control. Our suggested ratio is:

For juniors:

1 adult to 8 children

2 adults to 16 children

For infants:

1 adult to 4 children

2 adults to 8 children

We recommend that adults hold hands with children under 7 years of age wherever possible.

This ratio must not be exceeded but may be reduced depending on circumstances. Some routes may have passenger restrictions due to local difficulties, for example width of pavements, lack of official crossing points. These circumstances would be determined by the risk assessment.

Volunteers

The success of the walking bus is entirely dependent on the volunteers who will act as drivers and conductors on the bus. It is essential that the scheme has as many volunteers as possible, so that the route will always be covered and the responsibility does not fall on just two people to run the bus.

The walking bus co-ordinator should collect and distribute contact details for all the volunteers. These details should include information on when volunteers have been police checked and trained, and any additional useful information such as whether they have first aid training etc. They will also update information as necessary.

The coordinator will be responsible for organising the volunteers' rota and ensuring that the proper ratio of volunteers to children is maintained.

If a volunteer is unable to take their turn, they must contact the Lead Coordinator as soon as possible so that a relief can be contacted, otherwise the bus service for that day would have to be cancelled.

The driver should carry with them a register, as they will need to know who will be using the bus and when. They should also be aware of any medical requirements of individual passengers.

All volunteers will be given road safety training by the road safety team and must undergo a police check before they can become part of the walking bus team.

All volunteers must wear a reflective tabard which should be worn at all times when using the bus.



Parents

Before a child is allowed to travel on the walking bus, the parents or guardian must have signed a written consent form giving permission for their child to join the walking bus. They will also have to give emergency contact details and a list of any medical conditions that the bus operators should be aware of.

They must specify which days their child will be using the bus. It is important that parents notify the walking bus co-ordinator if their child is unable to go to school through, for example, illness, or if they cannot go home on the bus because of some other commitment like a visit to the dentist, or an after school activity.

All of this information should be kept by the walking bus coordinator and at the school office.

Children

The children taking part in the walking bus scheme must also sign a form, stating that they will behave sensibly and courteously at all times. Any child who is seen to endanger themselves or others or who behaves in an appropriate manner may be withdrawn from the walking bus. The head teacher will be notified and appropriate action will be taken.

Children must wear high visibility waistcoats whilst on the bus.

Bus timetable

The bus will operate a strict timetable and will not wait for latecomers, even when a child is expected to travel. All children must be at the designated 'bus stops' at the appointed time, and must be collected from the bus stop on time in the afternoon, unless permission has been given for them to continue home unsupervised.

It is important that parents remember that they are responsible for their child's safety on the way to and from the designated 'bus stop' and on the journey to and from school.

Routes and risk assessment

The walking bus should follow a set route. The route can be worked out by road safety officers in conjunction with the school and the volunteers.

The route proposed for the walking bus will have to undergo a risk assessment by the road safety team to ensure that it is suitable and safe for a walking bus service. The route must be followed at all times. If any section of the route becomes impassable, the adult volunteer must take an alternative route which minimises the risk to the children. If there are any major changes to the agreed route, a new risk assessment will have to be done.



The children are required to walk in pairs. If a route uses a narrow footpath, children will be required to walk in single file. The children must walk in an orderly manner on the pavement, away from the kerb. The members of the bus are expected to have due consideration for other pedestrians and should leave sufficient room for them to pass freely wherever possible.

Public Liability Insurance

Volunteers will be included in Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council's Employers' Liability and Public Liability insurance cover in the same manner as if they were employees of the council, provided they operate under the auspices of Trafford MBC and:

1. have received road safety training.
2. have provided personal details and have been CRB checked.
3. are monitored by the TMBC's road safety staff or the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator at least once a term.
4. a ratio of at least 1 adult volunteer to 8 children is maintained.
5. the risk-assessed route is followed.

Public Liability cover recognises the parent as a walking bus operator or volunteer helper. If a child is injured whilst in the care of a walking bus operator or volunteer and negligence is proven, compensation could be claimed in accordance with current civil justice procedures.

In addition, volunteers are included under TMBC's Personal Accident policy.

The insurance also applies to volunteers where they are operating under the supervision of a walking bus operator that is employed by Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.

Disclaimer:

Please note the above is a guide for Trafford Metropolitan Council only – you will have to get information on Public Liability Insurance from your own council regarding your local area.

Useful links

www.saferoutestoschool.org.uk

www.iwalktoschool.org

www.dft.gov.uk

www.sustrans.org.uk

www.teachernet.gov.uk

www.trafford.gov.uk

Initial Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: A Walking Bus

In an effort to ease congestion around our school whilst also improving pupils' fitness, we are considering setting up a 'Walking Bus'.

This scheme can help to improve your child's safety on the school journey. Walking to school is an ideal way to increase the amount of exercise your child gets, as well as helping them develop essential pedestrian skills for later in life. Both of these can contribute to them becoming responsible and healthy teenagers.

Children will walk to school as a group, using an agreed route, under the supervision of at least 2 responsible adults: a 'driver' and a 'conductor'. There will be set places along the way where children can join the 'bus'. It will operate every school day, whatever the weather!

Depending upon the level of interest shown by parents and their willingness to volunteer as drivers and conductors, the route will follow those roads most used by our pupils.

We are trying to find out whether or not this idea has your support. If you are interested in either becoming a volunteer, or in your child taking part in the 'bus', I would be grateful if you could complete the attached form and return it to school by the end of the week.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher

Walking Bus reply slip

I am interested in my child/ren taking part in the walking bus scheme.

Their name(s) is/are:

_____ Class _____

_____ Class _____

_____ Class _____

Our address is:

Please circle one option from each question:

1. Do you wish to know more about the scheme?

Yes No Maybe

2. Would you be willing to volunteer to help out on the walking bus?

Yes No Maybe

3. How does your child travel to school at the moment?

Walk Cycle Car Bus

4. Do you accompany them?

Yes No

Meeting Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: A Walking Bus

Thank you very much for the interest you have expressed in the Walking Bus scheme.

We are holding a meeting to discuss the scheme further and to look at potential routes for the bus. Representatives from the council (check this first with your local council) will be present to help us arrange volunteer timetables, routes, and to answer questions we might have.

The meeting will be held on _____ at _____.

We look forward to seeing you there

Yours sincerely,

Walking Bus Coordinator

Letter to Parents 2

Dear _____,

Re: A Walking Bus for _____ School

Thank you for your interest in the Walking Bus that is being set up at our school.

The proposed route and timetable are shown on the attached sheet. Before we begin, you must give your permission for your child or children to use the bus:

- Please sign and return the enclosed consent form to me, giving contact details, any relevant medical condition your child might have, and indicating when your child will use the bus, where you would like them to be picked up and collected from and whether they can continue home alone.
- Your child must read the 'Pupil's Promise' and sign to say they agree.
- A Walking Bus needs at least two adults to be safely supervised. If you can help with the bus, please let me know.

The success of the scheme will depend on the enthusiasm and willingness of parents to be involved. I hope that the bus will be of benefit to all concerned, particularly the children taking part.

Yours sincerely,

The Walking Bus Consent Form

I agree to my child, _____, Class _____, taking part in the Walking Bus scheme.

Address: _____

_____ Contact no: _____

I have read the walking bus guidelines and have explained to my child the need for good behaviour and to follow instructions.

I understand that my child's journey to and from school is still my responsibility.

I will make sure that he/she is at the 'bus stop' and collected from the 'bus stop' at the specified time, wearing the fluorescent tabard provided.

- Please provide details of any medication that your child may be taking and any medical or physical conditions that the walking bus co-ordinator should be aware of:

- He/She will travel on the Walking Bus on the days and times ticked below, unless I inform you otherwise:

- I understand that my child will join the walking bus at: _____ at _____ am

- My child will be collected/walk home (please delete) from _____ at _____ pm

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AM					
PM					

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Pupil's promise:

I promise:

- J To behave sensibly
- J To listen carefully and follow instructions
- J To walk with a partner and not push the person in front or lag behind
- J Not to run out into the road

Pupil's signature: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Contact Numbers:

1.

Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Home Telephone number: _____

Work Telephone number: _____

Mobile: _____

2.

Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Home telephone number: _____

Work telephone number: _____

Mobile: _____

**This information in this guideline booklet
was produced in association
with Trafford Borough Council**

